

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ESSENTIAL GUIDE

16 PHOTOSHOP
FABRIC TIPS



Workshop

PAINT ICONIC
FANTASY ART

Inside

LEARN TO PAINT ON
AN IPAD IN A DAY
CREATE A SURREAL
FANTASY CREATURE
COMPOSE A FIERCE
ACTION SCENE

MASTER THE RULES OF COLOUR & LIGHT

Improve your digital painting! Learn to use colour with confidence in your fantasy art, with **Helen Rusovich**

FIX YOUR ART! UNMISSABLE ONE-TO-ONE TUITION FROM A PRO ARTIST

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Welcome... to a world of colour



Understanding how and when to use colour and light has tormented artists for centuries, especially those starting out. This issue we tackle the subject head-on, with a beautiful portrait painting from Helen Rusovich. In her workshop on page 72 Helen covers using colour wheels and how lighting effects can lift your art.

There's a similarly surreal use of colour in Emmanuel Malin's vibrant faerie art on page 78. The French artist paints using only the Clone Stamp tool, and all the colour he can find. At the other end of the spectrum, on page 88, Phroilan Gardner explains how a muted colour palette with soft lighting can add atmosphere to an iconic fantasy figure painting.

Elsewhere, I enjoyed Drazenka Kimpel's concise tips on painting all those fiddly details and textures that bring a painting to life. Starting on page 94, she covers all manner of fabrics and gem stones. Drazenka has also included three easy-to-follow videos that are a must-see.

Finally, technology is moving at a startling pace. With a host of digital artist-friendly tablets emerging, our creative experts take a look at Microsoft's Surface (page 20) and Samsung's new Slate 700T (page 104), while on page 82 Robh Ruppel explains how keeping design and colour simple can make iPad painting a success.

Whether it's a timeless artistic test or a modern challenge, we've got it covered this issue.

Ian

Ian Dean, Editor
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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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Featured artists

ImagineFX brings together some of the world's finest artists to share their techniques and inspiration for creating stunning artwork



Aleksandr Nikonov



Aleksandr has been a video games concept artist for four years, working on MMORPGs such as Allods Online and Skyforge. He is a big fan of online challenges, which he uses to develop his art. This issue Aleksandr explores Conan, to paint the hero battling a giant python. On page 76 he shows how composition can make an action scene come alive. www.niconoff.cghub.com



Phroilan Gardiner



Phroilan is a former Blizzard concept artist now freelancing in the video games industry for major studios and small indie start-ups. This issue Phroilan channels his inner God of Thunder to create a heroic barbarian in a workshop that shows how to pose and paint strong fantasy character art. Starting on page 88, discover how to create a male hero with a brooding attitude. www.bit.ly/phroilan2



Emmanuel Malin



After leaving the world of medical illustration to pursue his own digital art, Emmanuel has become highly sort-after. His unique, surreal images demand to be seen. This issue Emmanuel shows how to paint with colour in a unique way, using the Clone tool to stamp shape and form into the painting. Pick up some brilliant new techniques, starting on page 78. www.emmanuelmalin.com



Drazenka Kimpel



A self-taught digital illustrator, Drazenka's style is influenced by Neoclassical and Pre-Raphaelite style masters. She paints beautifully detailed character portraits and this issue reveals the secrets of her craft. Whether you want to paint clothes, metals or bright jewellery to enhance the storytelling in your painting, you'll discover how best to do it in Drazenka's workshop on page 94. www.creativeidust.com



Robh Ruppel



An award-winning art director in the video games and film industries, Robh has a deep knowledge of landscape painting and the science of drawing. This issue he picks up his iPad to illustrate how strong design can affect the mood and readability of a painting. Learn how to see an environment's form in a new way with Robh's sci-fi art workshop on page 82. www.robhruppel.com



Andrei Pervukhin



A video game concept artist and illustrator for four years, Moscow's Andrei mixes traditional techniques and digital art to bring his paintings to life. Andrei believes core art theory should be employed no matter the medium you work in. His workshop on page 100 demonstrates how knowledge of art theory can improve a painting that mixes steampunk and traditional fantasy tropes. www.bit.ly/Pervukhin



In progress

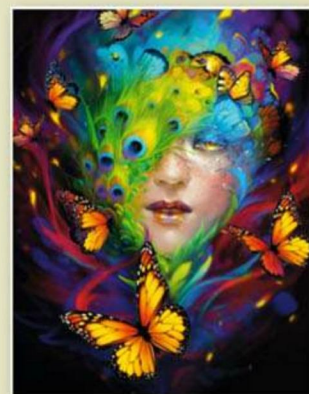
A clash of colour creates this issue's cover...



We want to bring some vibrancy to the magazine shelf, so we ask Helen to create a surreal, nature-inspired portrait flooded with colour. Her colour choices are perfect. We opt for the flush face, full on the cover as the impact is startling, even more so once cover lines are on...



Helen is careful about her use of colour and how the cover will be viewed. Her composition is key to creating a cover with impact. We assemble some makeshift cover lines so Helen can begin painting around them, forming butterflies and waves of colour between the words.



The final image packs all the colour, light and power we'd hoped for. Helen has composed a portrait that jumps off the page, whether being used on a cover or off. Turn to page 72 and you can follow her step-by-step workshop.



ImagineFX Cover artist

Sensual light and strong colour sum up Helen Rusovich's art, and for this issue she was pleased to reveal how she creates her beautiful paintings



Helen Rusovich

COUNTRY: Ukraine

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

WEB: www.helenrusovich.com
After discovering digital art when she was 17, Helen taught herself how to use Photoshop and pursued her own unique style of painting. She has since been featured in Exposé, Exotique, d'artiste: Fashion Design and has recently begun work for World of Warcraft TCG. The future certainly looks bright for this colourful artist.



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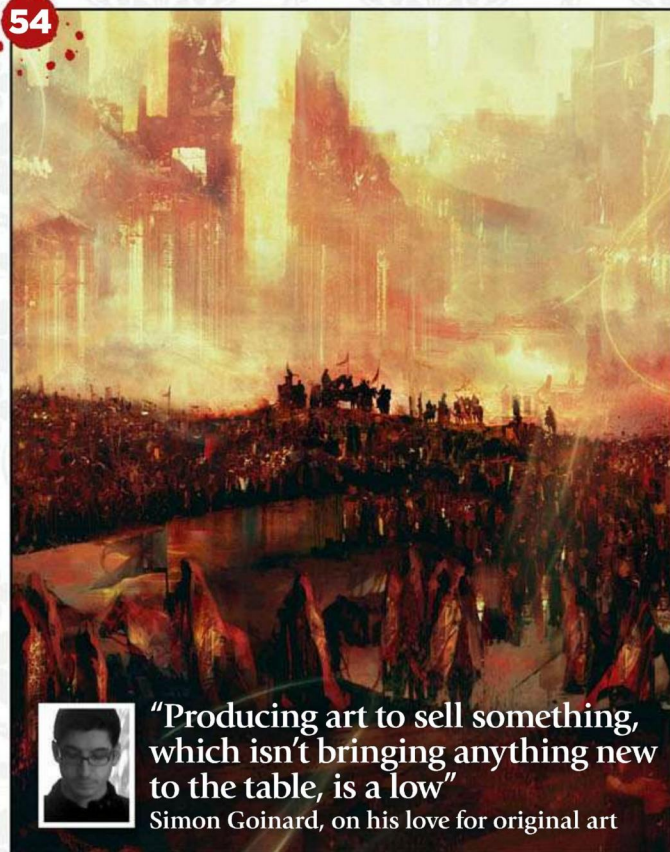
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"Producing art to sell something, which isn't bringing anything new to the table, is a low"
Simon Goinard, on his love for original art

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



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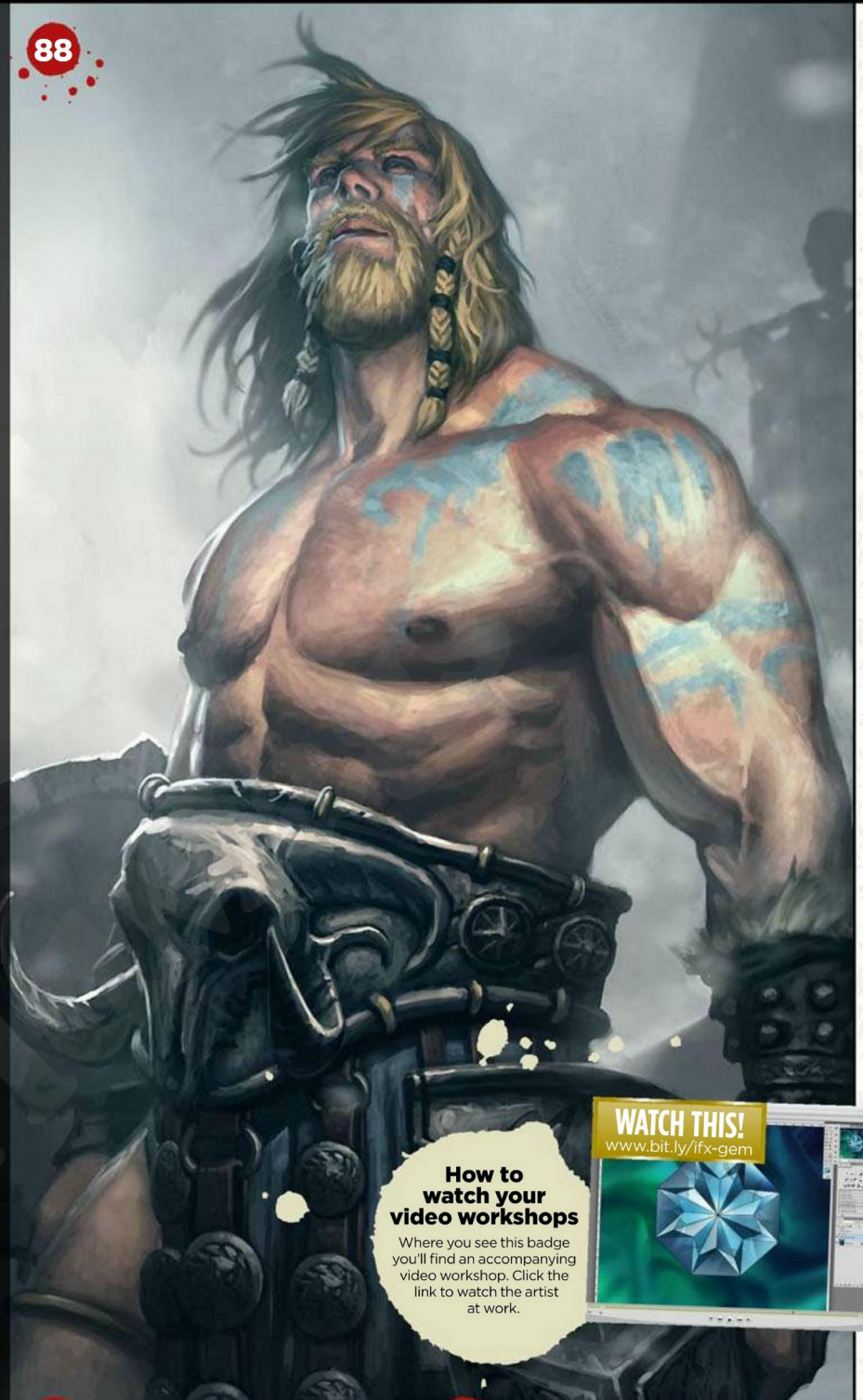
Artist Q&A

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Life-like hands, Photoshop brushes, swamps, tombs, monster armies, atmospheric smoke trails and more!



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How to watch your video workshops

Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop. Click the link to watch the artist at work.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ix-gem



82



Paint on the iPad

100



Create a steampunk dragon

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

1

Joe Wilson

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Having managed to break through from amateur dreamer to professional illustrator for games like World of Warcraft and

Lord of the Rings series, Connecticut-born artist Joe hopes to encourage others with his new DIY art blog, on www.diyartschool.blogspot.co.uk.

As for his own work, he says, "I use Photoshop CS5 about 90 per cent of the time, SketchBook Pro about five per cent of the time, and the other five per cent comes in with other software on an as-needed basis. Every new project still excites the little kid in me."

1 THE WAR ANGEL "Each year I attend Illuxcon, a great convention that focuses on fantasy artists. Last year I wanted to paint something that would make a great banner for my table and would hopefully attract attention from across the room. It ended up being my favourite piece of the year."

2 PROFESSOR PUTRICIDE "This was a sample/fan art I created, hoping to get work on the WoW card game. The piece started out as a relatively unknown character, based on an in-game model. The art, however, made its way to the web soon after the appearance of a new character using the same model."

2



© Blizzard Entertainment





Artist crit

Paco Rico Torres is entranced by Joe's striking sword-maiden



"This image has a solid shape, nice pose and colours, cool armour and cooler sword. But what sells it to me are those killer eyes. Sometimes the smallest details make the difference between good and great."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Joe - you've won yourself a copy of Exotique 6 and Character Modeling 3! To find out more about these two great art resources, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

Javier and Jesus Carmona

LOCATION: Spain

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



The Carmona brothers have been painting in traditional media for a long time, but moved into digital fantasy art seven years ago as a duo (although Jesus is the elder by two years). They've collaborated on novel and album covers, and are both



working on a new graphic novel, with BR Stateham. "It's a great project and we're very excited about it," says Jesus.

1 ROLAND OF THE HIGH CRAGS "This is the novel cover of the same title, the second book of the Roland saga written by BR Stateham," says Jesus. "This is an example of the kind of work we do together. It's more than funny to work with my brother."

2 BIO-MECHANIC ALIEN "Just an opportunity to paint something futuristic that also represented feminine beauty," says Jesus. "This was a dream Javier had. He just sketched it out with pen and paper, and hours later it became what you see here."

3 DWARFS CHARGING "When I played RPGs I always tended to play dwarfs because of their strength, bravery, courage and pigheadedness," says Jesus. "I love those features, and this image was a tribute to them."



David Neaves

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



David is a self-taught artist and a long-term fan of ImagineFX. But that's not the only reason we've chosen to feature him.

"I originally painted in oils, but I find Photoshop is not only quicker, but it gives me more scope to let my imagination run free, as I can take more risks and correct things when I make a mistake. Also, I don't get into trouble for dropping paint on the carpet."

1 SEA PEOPLE "I like painting nature and I also like to paint the human figure, so most of my work combines the two. Sea people, mermaids and mermen dancing in the underwater sunlight."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's clever of David to use the lengthy tails of the mermaid and merman to take the viewer's eye around his painting. And I like how the faces of the two lovers are obscured – signalling that they only have eyes for each other."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Ken Christiansen

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Ken has over a decade's experience of video game pre-production work, and game design in general, working for Nintendo and

Disney Interactive. He moved to Glendale, California, to set up his own design company, Bad Flip Productions, and the best of its work can be found at www.badflip.com.

1

1 SPACE MARINE "This is a hybrid approach for me, trying to bridge the more organic and painterly freehand style, with my usual tight selection, fill and shade process for hard surfaces. I painted the marine in greyscale, then coloured him with additional layers over the top. It's just an armour study, beyond what I was trying to achieve technically – thematically, he's a scout, cresting a hill on an alien world."

2 LOST "I wanted to emulate one of those melancholy 1970s sci-fi paperback covers, with the featured character lonely in the vastness of outer space. So I made it literal, and gave him a little digital map readout to push the idea that he's flat-out lost. I did a pencil drawing to essentially ink digitally, then filled in with flat colours and painted out, with the background being a more painterly approach."



2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"This is a great painting that illustrates how an understanding of clothes and costume details, when to use them and where, can really enhance an image and help develop a story."

Ian Dean,
Editor



1

+ Irineo Maniego III

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



The Philippines-born Irineo is currently resident in England studying 3D animation, and he says that the experience of living in the UK has been formative.

"Knowing two entirely different cultures had a huge effect on how I perceive the mundane and how I apply various visual aesthetics to my work," says the artist. "Different people I meet with different attitudes and perspective about life helped me create distinct personalities in my characters."

Irineo counts James Tissot, Rembrandt and the works of Rankin and Vivienne Westwood as the main influences on his work.

2



1 DEPARTURE CIRCUS "I wanted to express varying subtle emotions in this piece through the mother and her child. I was inspired by the early 1900 French style, and mixed in a bit of contemporary style in the design."

2 CECILIAS "Most sketches are drawn on paper and later developed in Photoshop, including colour studies. I remember having an urge to paint a simple image of two girls looking for shade, but after loads of attempts the concept grew and ended up having a touch of surrealism. Painting movement has always been a challenge to me, but I try my best to incorporate it in my pieces. That's why the girls look as though they're gliding and dancing in the air."

Mushk Rizvi

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.mushkrizvi.blogspot.com

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SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



Mushk is a 21-year-old student who left her home country of Pakistan for the US to be an engineering major. However, fate had other ideas when an obsession with video game animation called for a sudden switch from maths to art. "To me, art is totally opposite to maths," she says, "it's completely unpredictable. I must say that it's really hard for me to grasp certain things, but I always give it my best and see what I can do."

1 CLAIRVOYANCE "A sketch I did after watching *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and because it was just lying around, I decided to colour it. I wanted her to have a celestial feeling, like a boss in a video game or some guiding character."

2 JOAN OF ARC "This piece is a tribute to Howard Pyle, who's one of my favourite 20th century illustrators. I saw his version and got the urge to do it in my own style."

3 MEZZANINE FOREST "This is a part of a story that I saw in a dream. It's a platform forest. One platform connects to several others and they're always in a state of transition."

4 THE ENCOUNTER "This was a two-hour speed painting I did with my friends. We worked with a word generator. The sentence we got was, 'A crying griffin talks.' With a two-hour limit I had no idea what I would do, but just kept on going. I started by blocking in solid abstract shapes and soon it turned into this."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Mushk's use of a word generator to create the theme for *The Encounter* is a fantastic idea. The combination of wild textures, muted colour palette and scale has exaggerated the emphasis of the encounter."

Dan Vincent,
Art Editor





1 Paul Reck

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



A graphic designer and illustrator from Wexford, Paul admits to taking a while to migrate from paint and paper to the digital realms. "After eons of trial and error," he says, "I finally got my head around digital art and haven't looked back."

1 ASSASSIN "A fan art piece I created for submission in the Carte Blanche section of the Assassin's Creed art book. This was my take on a Parisian assassin from the early 1800s."

2 WITCHES OF OZ "I approached this painting from a more graphic perspective. It illustrates the Witches of Oz as they are depicted in Wicked, the novel by Gregory Maguire. In this story The Good Witch of the North and the Wicked Witch of the West grow through adversity to be best friends, while being forced to remain as polar opposites."

3 CORY "This is a piece I made for a friend based on characters he created for his own project, loosely based on Irish Celtic mythology. This character is a pyrokinetic as well as a formidable physical opponent."

4 JOE "This is a companion piece to Cory. Joe is a badass warrior, but also a powerful telekinetic. In this piece I wanted to capture a quiet moment following a heated battle."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"As a fan of the Assassin's Creed games, I like Paul's take on a 19th century Parisian hero, and among the other striking portraits, his Witches of Oz piece shows the artist has a range of styles and skills at his disposal."

Beren Neale,
Features Editor





Tor Jäger

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Having had some success as a freelance illustrator, Tor can allow himself to philosophise a little on his own artistic methods.

"I like simple tools. For sketching ideas, nothing beats the old HB pencil on standard copy paper. In Photoshop I tend to use only a few brushes and just one layer.

Tor's work has an unmistakable humour of its own. "I love keeping myself updated on the latest digital art," he says, "but for influences I try to look outside the world of concept art. Folklore and mythology is a fantastic source for stories and characters."

1 HUNTER "A Character of the Week challenge on ConceptArt.org, for the topic Serial Killer. I guess it's the beauty and the beast theme. In the back of my mind were also the film Deliverance and its scary, if slightly comical, hillbillies."

2 BUS STOP "I think it can be more exciting putting the troll in a more ordinary human context than in a pure fantasy world. Maybe the troll is going somewhere? Perhaps only the child can see him? Or maybe it's not even a troll, just a friendly old man?"

3 THE FOURTH HORSEMAN "This is a character design of one of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The mask with the big beak comes from the costume of the medieval plague doctors. I also gave him a church censer. Maybe he uses it to spread plague? And the swinging motion helps the composition."



1 Rupy Bhogal

LOCATION: Canada

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



After one year of studying computer science, Rupy realised it wasn't for him and, much to his parents' disappointment, he left school to pursue something else. He took art classes and eventually got onto Seneca College's (Toronto) Animation and Gaming course.

He works in the animation industry, but has been a concept artist on several projects. "I take inspiration from John Wallin Liberto, Craig Mullins and Michael Kutsche," he says, "and I believe that focus and an unrelenting passion are crucial to finding your way."

1



2

1 TROPHY ROOM "I wanted to paint an environment that showed a glimpse into the life of an emperor who has captured rare, mythical creatures for his own amusement, locking them away, but treasuring them like trophies."

2 INVESTIGATION FOLLOWS "For this concept I created a futuristic world where robots are used to identify and capture humans. I was influenced by the fast pace of big city life, and tried to use colour and shape to convey the energy present in high-tech cities."

3 POWER CENTRE "This concept is of a dynamic, futuristic city where the main focus is the city's power reactor. I tried to explore the dynamic between the organic and structural elements, in what I think is an accurate representation of what our world might look like 300 years from now."

4 SLAVE WAY "For this concept I created a world where humans are slaves to mythical, Egyptian-inspired, larger-than-life creatures. My aim was to show the distress experienced by man, but more so to have fun with the design of unique and strange characters."

SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them. fxpose@imaginefx.com

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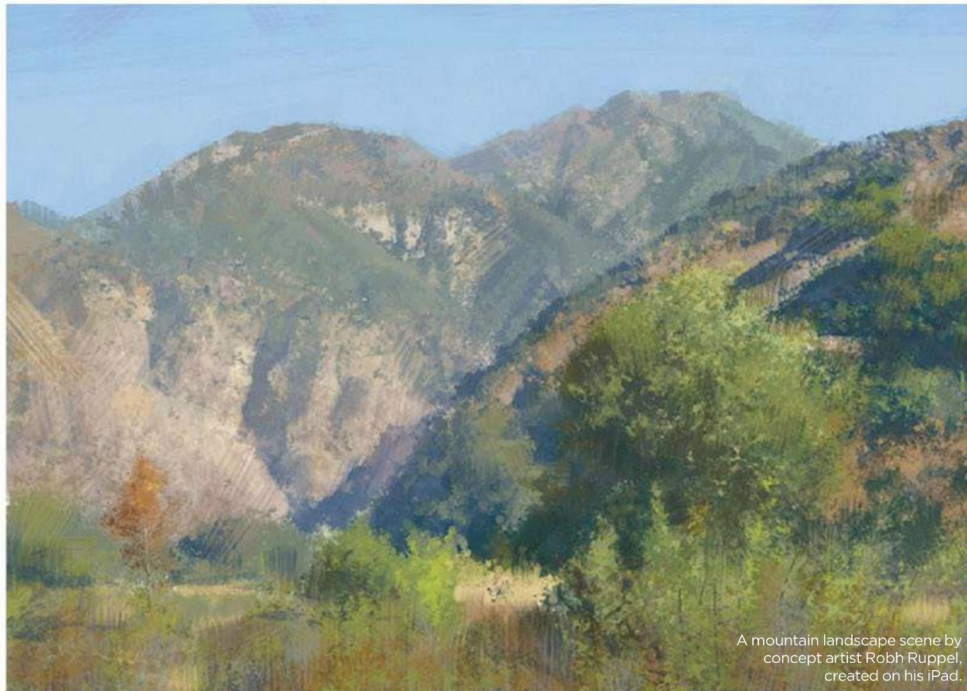


"Rupy uses a great sense of scale to invite us into his fantastical worlds. I can imagine standing in front of the great building in Slave Way and being awestruck by the massive guards and creatures."

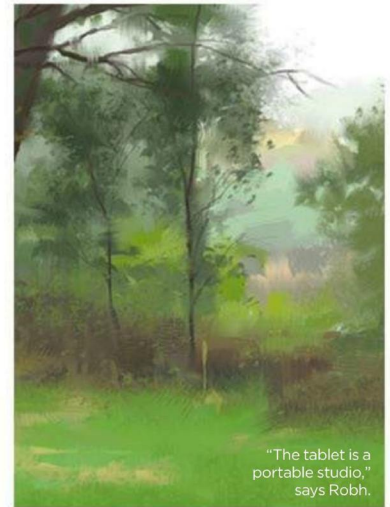
Shona Cutt,
Designer

4

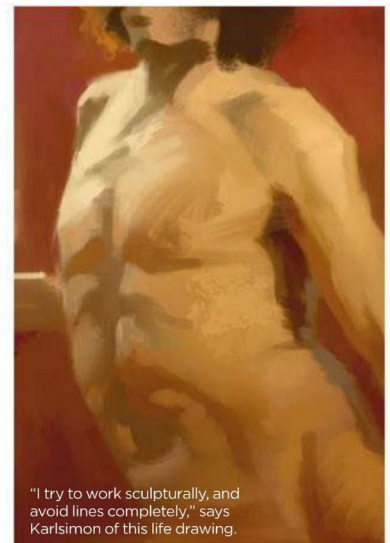




A mountain landscape scene by concept artist Robh Ruppel, created on his iPad.



"The tablet is a portable studio," says Robh.



"I try to work sculpturally, and avoid lines completely," says Karl Simon of this life drawing.

Is it time to paint on a new Surface?

All Surface? The iPad may have revolutionised digital painting on the move, but with Microsoft's Surface due for release in the autumn, is Apple's best-seller really the be-all and end-all?

Digital artists who've experimented with the iPad have had impressive results. But it's not without its downsides: "It's difficult



to draw on," says Karl Simon (www.karlSimon.com). "Even if you use a stylus, it still simulates a finger, so feels

more like a crayon or a brush than a pen. Great for painting blocky shapes, but not so good for line work."

It's amazing how much you can achieve with a finger, however, as Kyle Lambert (www.kylelambert.co.uk) showed when he got hold of an iPad and the Brushes app on launch day: "I created a few paintings that I considered to be finished quality, using only my finger," he recalls. He's since started using a Nomad Brush stylus for more detail.

Like Karl Simon, Kyle believes pressure sensitivity is a big attraction: "I've used a couple of tablets with a pressure-sensitive

stylus," he says, "and it makes a massive difference to the speed you can create art."

Kyle has also tried a Samsung Galaxy Tab, but found it sluggish compared to the iPad if he pushed it too hard.

Although satisfied with his current setup, Kyle's been watching Microsoft's Surface with interest, particularly the digital ink support: "It looks amazing," he says. "Assuming you can use the stylus in apps like Photoshop, it'll be a big step for digital artists like me."

Karl Simon is wary of the Surface's 16:9 aspect ratio, which he argues is more suited to watching video than sketching. But the digital ink intrigues him. "If I've understood it correctly, when you use the digital ink pen the Surface stops taking touch input. Sounds like a good idea. When painting on the iPad, if I rest my hand on the canvas it screws up the painting."



Microsoft Surface's detachable keyboard is great for shortcuts, and comes in multiple colours.

“The iPad is great for painting blocky shapes, but not so good for line work”



BRAZIL ART NUTS

If you live in Brazil then why not join this digital art collective? If you don't live in Brazil then you'll have to settle for admiring the group's cool art. Don't blame us! **Page 23**



ONLY FOOLS RUSH IN?

The anime cuteness of PlayStation Vita hit game Gravity Rush is down to artists Oga Takeshi (of Siren fame) and Saito Shunsuke. They're no fools. **Page 24**



BLUE SKY THINKING

Fantasy artist Matt Dixon does his best work in his converted loft, with a skylight for inspiration, guitars for short breaks and a mirror for gurning into. **Page 26**

"The painting software for the iPad is basic, but it's this simplicity that makes it great for life drawing," says KarlSimon, who painted this example of

GO HERE
TO READ
KARLSIMON'S
IPAD WORKSHOP:
www.bit.ly/ifxks

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

ROBH RUPPEL

The artist says features are no match for artistic ability

How do you use a tablet as part of your creative process?

My iPad is a portable studio, and its long battery life makes it particularly useful when working outdoors. Of course, you still need an umbrella of some kind to keep the sun off the screen. That would be a true innovation: a screen you can see in strong sunlight.

What other limitations have you experienced?

The number of layers – although that means you don't rely on too many tricks and techniques. You focus on drawing and design. Remember those things called markers? You don't erase or Ctrl-Z those. You decide beforehand what you're trying to accomplish, see it in your mind and then the hand executes it. Crazy, eh?

Do styluses help to improve your painting?

People complain about the lack of pressure sensitivity on the iPad. Really? A good artist can draw on concrete with a charcoal briquette and get their point across. Programs have settings for thick to thin, slow transitions in and out, and mimic pressure sensitivity closely enough. An artists should be thinking about shape, colour and perspective.

Are you excited about the Microsoft Surface – any particular features you're keen to try out?

It looks like it has some nice improvements, and will probably be closer to working on a high-end station with a Cintiq. But you can still make really great art with what's out there now. The real art comes from the choices you make, not the technique.



Robh does digital plein air painting, matte, concept and character designs. He's based in California, US.

www.robhruppel.com

Continued from previous page...



Karlsimon's Hampstead Roots: "The trick? Make it look like the tree's growing up through the ground."

The physical keyboard could be a game-changer, too: "Shortcuts are nonexistent on most mobile devices, and it's something I miss on my iPad," Karlsimon says. He's noncommittal about making the switch, however, and plans to wait for the reception before making a judgement.

Switching from one piece of tech to another isn't always a positive thing, says Nick Pugh (www.nickpugh.com) "I love



the innovations that are being developed, but I hate to change my workflow," he

says, pointing out that the medium of oil paint has stayed consistent for 150 years, but still takes decades to learn.

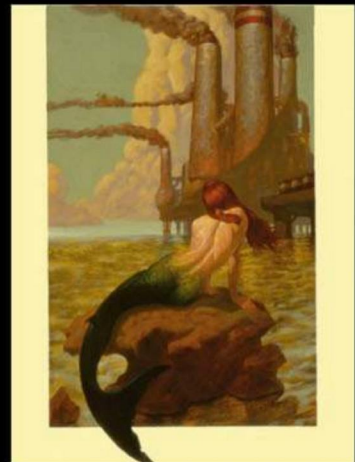
"Change can be disruptive, and it makes it hard to master things," says Nick. "The effect of hyperactive change in our digital art world is a tendency for the art being created to look generic relative to the tools used. But the young people I teach still surprise me with the speed and enthusiasm that they embrace new stuff."

Kyle agrees that change for its own sake isn't worth it: "It's about allowing me to do something that I currently can't do," he reflects. "The iPad enabled me to get away from my desktop in a practical way, and sketch anywhere, plus seamless integration with my workflow. The next great tool will have to allow all of this, and bring something even better to the table." 🍎

The triumphant and tragic moment when the Vampire King is slain by his mortal daughter. A sneak peek at a graphic novel Armand has on the back burner.



This scene depicts the Tugboats of New Chicago finding two missing deep water construction robots, commandeered by raiders from the sea.



Armand painted this image traditionally for the Heal the Bay foundation, when he was studying. The foundation is a non-profit environmental group working towards the betterment of the Santa Monica Bay in Los Angeles.

Time traveller

For sale With some top film titles under his belt, this concept artist is getting busy making his personal art book a reality – and you can help



Having wrapped up work as a colour and set design artist for Pixar's 13th animated film *Brave*, Armand Baltazar has been hard at work on his book *The Collidescape Chronicles Book One: Diego and the*

Steam-Pirates.

Industry veteran Armand has been working on the book for a while now, unveiling it to the public at Comic Con, and gaining momentum by selling one-off prints via his site.

"The book is an illustrated novel in the tradition of a *Dinotopia* by James Gurney or the *Gnomes* book, illustrated by Rien Poortvliet," Armand tells us.

Diego and the Steam-Pirates promises to be a pulse-pounding adventure. It takes place on an Earth where layers of time from prehistory to the distant future have been mashed together.

And the art involved is absolutely beautiful. Some of these original pieces from the book, as well as other personal pieces by the concept artist, are on sale to fund the publishing of the book. "One hundred and fifty signed and numbered editions of the images on this page are being sold," Armand says, "printed on Epson Velvet Fine Art Archival Paper in archival pigmented inks."

The prints are available now: www.armandbaltazar.com.

J is for... Jackalope?

Alpha beast Multi-faceted artist embarks on an A-Z of things that don't exist

We all know that A is for apple, or possibly aardvark. But it can also be for Amphisbaena – which, as we all know, is a double-headed serpent in Greek mythology.



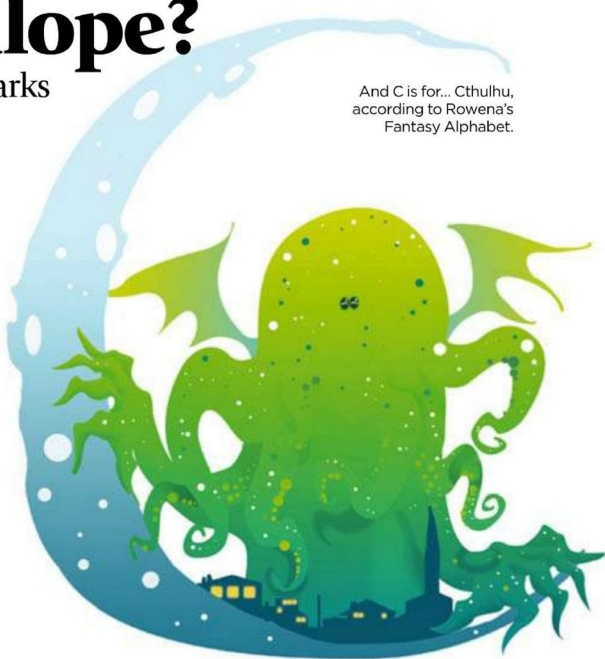
If you didn't know that, then the Fantasy Alphabet – the latest project from Edinburgh-based artist Rowena Aitken – replete with cutie Cthulhu and baby Bunyip, is the ideal educational tool for you. Being more experienced in luscious fantasy artwork, these pastel-shaded

monsters were a real departure. But she says, "My work as a fantasy illustrator meant that each piece I worked on was a detailed painting and I wanted something fun and not too time-consuming, but still very distinctive."

Budding artists can also get some tips from visiting her blog. She adds, "Go to life drawing as much as you can, find someone who can crit you on your work... and never take crits personally."

You can check out the full line-up, as well as more news on the artist, at www.rowenaaitken.com.

And C is for... Cthulhu, according to Rowena's Fantasy Alphabet.



André Bdois's atmospheric piece *Magia* took one of the runners-up places in last year's contest.

Latin digital art thrives

Brazil nuts Nearly 10 years strong, Brazil's Digital Art collective announces its latest competition winners

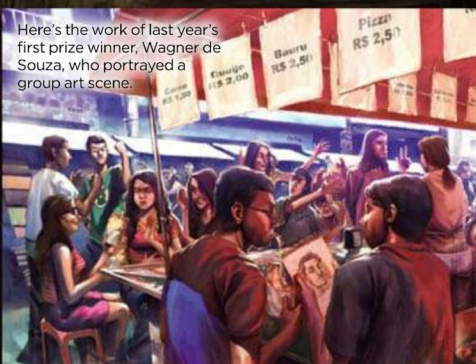
BrasilART was originally set up by Isac Goulart and friends in November 2002, to help bring together and support Brazilian digital artists, and the collective is as strong as ever, 10 years on.

Besides the supportive element of the group, regular competitions "motivate people to break their own boundaries," says spokesman **Adriano Hamaguchi Gonçalves**. "As designers and illustrators, challenges must be our fuel," he says. "There are a lot of amazing professionals over there, but we're competitors when we consider the best clients to work for. There's space for every artist, but the best spots will be conquered only by the best."



Having scored a big success with last year's inaugural competition, the 2011 Pixel Show Cultural Contest, BrasilART's most recent survival of the fittest is its Digital Art Cultural Contest sponsored by Corel Brazil, with the top prize being a copy of its flagship title Painter 12. However, although you needn't worry about any theme or draconian entry requirements, one big exception is that there's no point in entering unless you come from Brazil.

Nonetheless, if the offerings here have whetted your appetite, you can keep an eye on the Latino group's artistic endeavours by visiting its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/brasilART, or its deviantART group over at www.brasil.deviantart.com.



Here's the work of last year's first prize winner, Wagner de Souza, who portrayed a group art scene.



+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Alexander Jansson

www.bit.ly/ifx-jansson

This Swedish dreamer's fantasy worlds caught our eye straight away, and have to be zoomed into to be believed. The impossible meeting of personality and landscape creates non-existent locales that you really want to visit – as long as there was a return ticket available.



AP Barr

www.apbarr.deviantart.com

Any horror movie fan's dream, Canadian artist AP Barr's deviantART site is mostly made of very rough pen sketches, but the cream of them get finished off digitally, and the mix of cartoon stylings, scratchy pulp art and complete grotesquery is well worth investigating.



Gelar Esapria

www.largee17.deviantart.com

We'll be honest – we don't know what on earth inspires Indonesian superhero painter Gelar half the time, but his digital paintings are worth checking out, for sure. They range from the perplexingly cartoony, to Assassin's Creed-based art and deadly straight-faced epic Star Wars offerings.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"My favourite type of job is when I'm working with talented and nice people, regardless of how we're working on the project"

Simon Goinard reveals his strict criteria for freelance work... Page 54

Upside-down art

Feel the rush What's the story behind the artwork for Gravity Rush, the PlayStation Vita hit?

When a concept artist like Oga Takeshi (the original artist on Sony horror series Siren) debuts a new game, you pay attention. More so because the drab tones of zombie survival are replaced by vibrant colour and anime cuteness.

A far cry from the horror of Siren, Gravity Rush is fluffy, colourful and charming. Fuelling this new departure for the art team is the inclusion of Saito Shunsuke on the roster, whose previous game art includes the manga-like Ape Escape series. Saito and Oga transferred the original comic-book-themed PS3 designs to the less-powerful Vita platform, "making sure not to simplify anything in the process," Oga says of his work on the new video game.



Gravity Rush has been successful enough that it could be a whole new franchise. You can see more of Oga's work in video games at his website here: www.bit.ly/ogatakeshi.



Three of the characters from Gravity Rush – including the lead, Kat – as drawn by Saito Shunsuke.



FINGERPRINTS created in Painter
by Grajana Zielinskas



Killer performance

Creativity isn't just about the finished product, it's also about the process. Corel® Painter™ blends the freedom of traditional media with the power of digital innovation. Paint flows onto your digital canvas in true-to-life style and new Multi-Touch support lets you stay in control. It's everything you need to create award-winning art.

Check out the free trial of Corel Painter in this issue's DVD.
To learn more about Painter, go to www.corel.com/risingstars

WorldMags.net



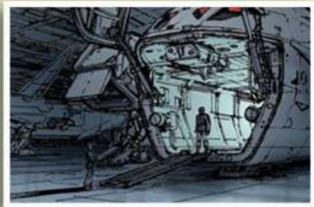
In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



iPong Battery power

The unfortunately named Pong Research Corporation has launched a range of tablet and smartphone cases that claim to possess magic properties. Well, they'll improve signal strength, reduce radiation, and more importantly for all you plein air artists, maintain battery life. The tablet cases cost £40. See more here: www.ponguk.com.



Babylon 5 Epic fan site keeps growing

B5 Scrolls started five years ago as a minor fan site to all things Babylon 5, and has now ballooned into a haven for Babylon 5 fans. Specifically, it has a massive collection of concept art from the 1990s TV series, as well as plenty of interviews with the show's artists. Check it out: www.bit.ly/ixf-bab5.



Comic app Make fire

Liam Sharp's new digital comics platform MadeFire launched this June. It offers an array of immersive bespoke comics, created for the platform that "defies left-to-right" reading of comics. There's loads of great artists involved, and plenty of titles – it's definitely one to watch out for: www.madefire.com.

There's a huge bookcase full of reference on the wall behind my chair from which I'll select any material for the project I'm working on. I have to keep them just out of easy reach, or I'd spend hours thumbing through them. Inner boss wouldn't like that.

This is one of my partner's creations. No real surprise that I would fall for a girl who still enjoys pulling the heads off dolls.



Ken is a ceramic money box, and my harshest critic. He works in partnership with the inner boss to keep me motivated.

This lives on the desk beside my keyboard and serves both as a place to capture ideas when they strike and a to-do list. And an occasional coaster for my coffee mug.



Setting an atmosphere is key, and scent can play a big role in that. My room smells like one of those shops filled with resin skulls, crystals and tarot cards. Though you'll notice a definite absence of similar articles here.

Probably the most important mood regulating device in the room. My iPod is filled with a wide array of music from ambient to techno, sound effect libraries and film scores, and lots and lots of heavy metal.

Matt Dixon

Goblin goo Matt Dixon explains how Victorian parks and actual blue-sky thinking inspires him to create his pin-up fantasy art



My workspace is located in a room in the converted loft of my house. Two steep flights of stairs is the perfect distance from the throb of

family life when there's troublesome goblin anatomy to tackle.

A pleasant side effect of a loft studio is the view. I overlook my chimney pot, my neighbour's roof, several gardens, a

Victorian park with some lovely big trees, and a significant chunk of sky. That means there's always something interesting to look at or listen to, and I consider that window a valuable source of inspiration.

Other than the view from the window, there's very little else of interest in my workspace. I try to keep clutter to a minimum. That helps to remind me that my studio is a place of work and means that

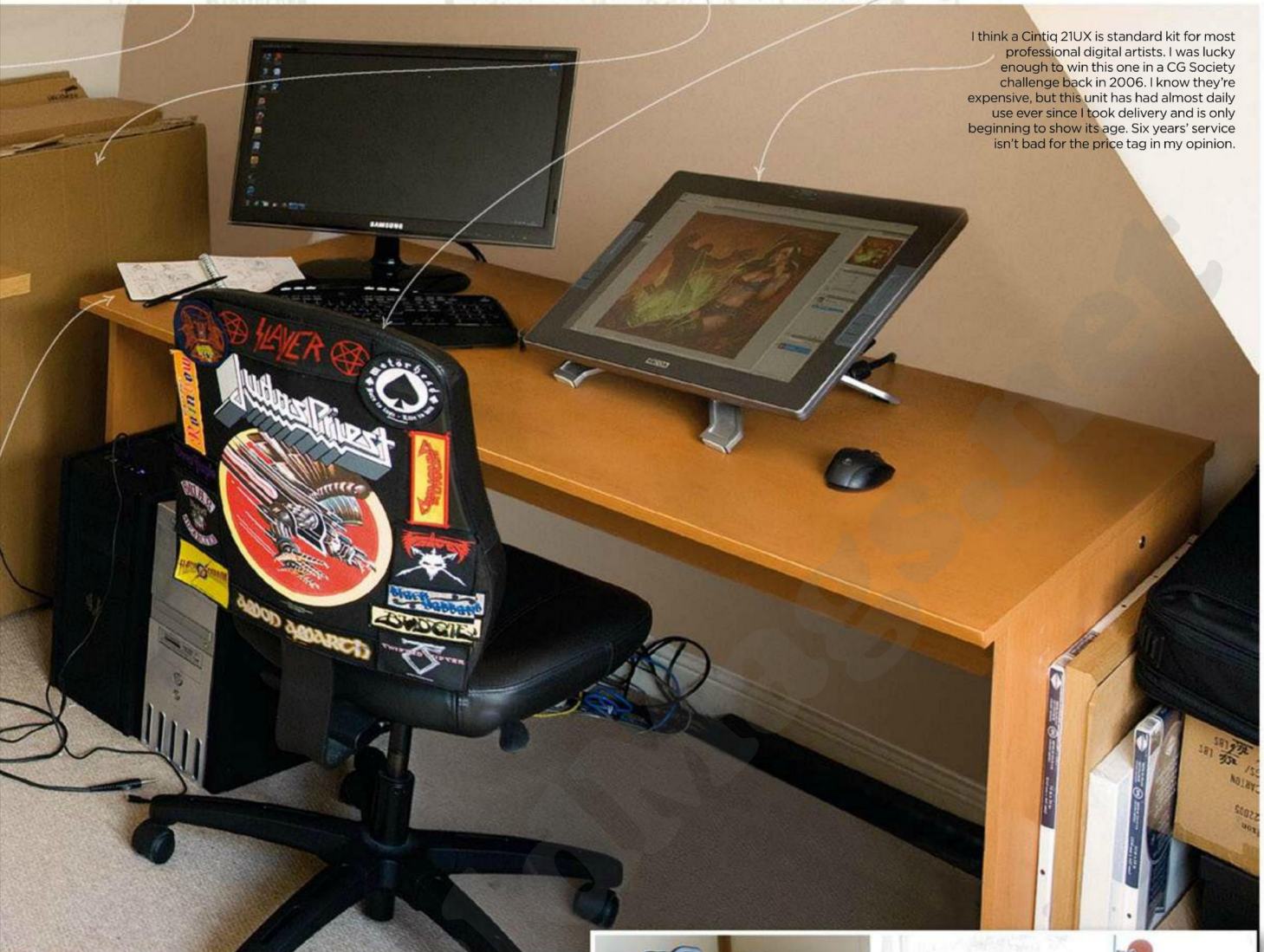
Artist news, software & events

Ever since my earliest commissions to draw hideous beasts I've found a mirror to be essential kit. Gurning into a mirror is a great way to work out facial expressions.

Those large boxes contain canvas prints that I sell at conventions and through my website. A very big pile of boxes filled with a variety of show stock is just out of shot.

I have no doubt that there was a significant increase in my productivity once I added the patches to the back of my office chair.

I think a Cintiq 21UX is standard kit for most professional digital artists. I was lucky enough to win this one in a CG Society challenge back in 2006. I know they're expensive, but this unit has had almost daily use ever since I took delivery and is only beginning to show its age. Six years' service isn't bad for the price tag in my opinion.



my environment has a neutral atmosphere, which makes it much easier for me to create an appropriate mood for the work I'm doing. I've found that setting a suitable atmosphere with music, incense and light is a very important part of my process.

My working day always begins with coffee, after which I'll attend to email and any paperwork that needs taking care of. Placing these more formal tasks at the beginning of the day helps me mentally 'clock in' to a working frame of mind.

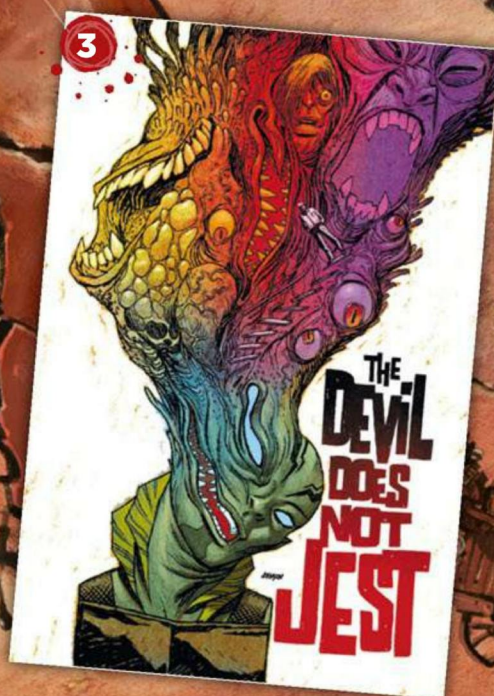
When I started to work freelance I didn't expect time management and self-discipline to be such a consideration, but I found I was much more easily distracted than I thought I would be. As such, I've had to adopt a tough inner boss to keep me on the straight and narrow! Once he's satisfied that my admin chores are complete, the music goes on and I can start to scribble!

Matt's a full-time freelance artist and writer living in England, whose work can be seen at www.mattdixon.co.uk.

When I need a treat, salt levels have run low, or I just have to feel fried skin shattering between my gnashers it's comforting to know there are plenty of pork scratchings at hand.



My guitars live under the window in my workspace. I'll grab one when I need a short break - it's great just to have a change of position and to move the arms and hands around a bit. On a longer break I'll often work out new pieces to add to my burgeoning repertoire.



PLANET OF THE ARTS



HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM. CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Features Editor

DEAN YEAGLE

Cartoon pin-ups | US

1 Dean's online gallery takes a cartoon view of familiar pin-up poses. There's more to admire, including his work for dozens of major entertainment studios. www.cagedbeagle.com

KEVIN NELSON

Artist blog | US

2 An employee of the House of Mouse, Kevin Nelson's blog is a bit impersonal, but is packed with his early artwork for recent Disney CG Rapunzel flick Tangled. www.bit.ly/ifx-nelson

COMIC COVERS

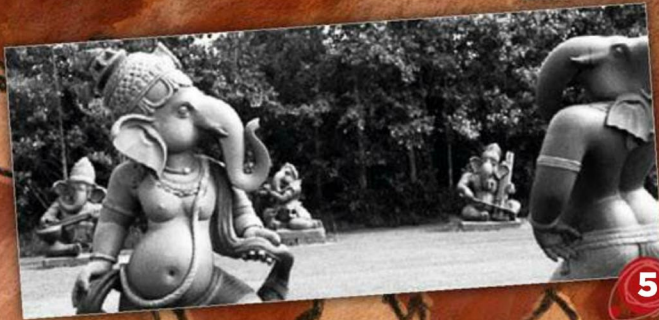
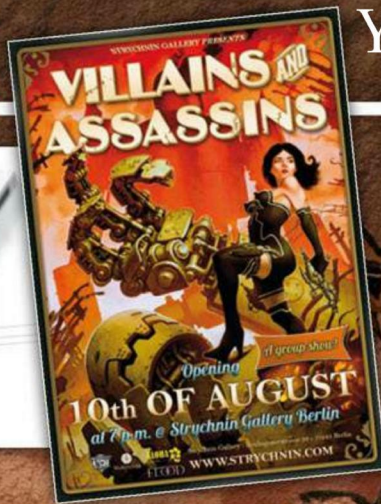
Critical blog | US

3 Johnson Cover Hi-Lo is a regular critique of comic book covers. The site is masterminded by the entertaining, professional artist and animator Dave Johnson. www.bit.ly/ifx-hi-lo

VILLAINS & ASSASSINS

Strychnin Gallery | Germany

4 If you bought this mag first day out, you still have until 9 September to get to Berlin to see the comic book art exhibition Villains & Assassins, at the Strychnin Gallery. www.strychnin.com



5



UNITED ART FAIR

Event | India

5 The Indian Art Fair 2012 is set to run from 27 to 30 September this year, in New Delhi, providing the biggest meeting of digital and traditional artists in the country.
www.unitedartfair.com

MAGGI

Manga Harem | South Korea

6 From the South Korean town of Soul-t'ukpyolsi, concept artist Maggi has a harem of exotic females online, with manga-inspired Alice In Wonderland designs a highlight.
www.maggi.cghub.com

Map art by Jonny Duddle,
www.duddlebug.com

WorldMag.net

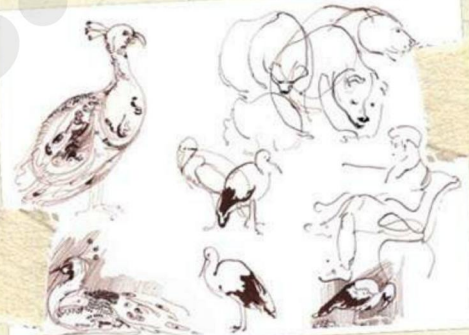
SKETCH JAM

We swing down Moldova way, to visit the artistic talent at AS City Sketch...



AS City Sketch

LOCATION: Various venues in Chişinău
WHEN: Every Saturday
WEB: www.bit.ly/ifx-ascity



There's a distinct Edwardian elegance to Motruc Mihaela's line drawings.



The group found Andrei's bears have a certain Disney flavour to them... that's a compliment.



Pascal Vasile found it impossible to resist adding colour to the peacocks.

FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX Forum
Winners

Image of the month

Oh, what a world! We're off to see the Wizard of a futuristic Oz, as this month's winning image depicts L Frank Baum's Emerald City from the year 3000...



This was a tall order – not only to recreate Baum's famous fantasy world of Oz, but to somehow suggest that we're that far into the future. Luckily, you couldn't get a fresher perspective on the all-American mythology than Alexander Chuplygin's.

"When I was a kid the Oz series was one of my favourite books," he tells us. "In Russia it was known as an adaptation by Aleksandr Volkov. There was a flock of giant eagles that lived in the mountains surrounding the magical world of Oz." And they gave him an idea...

MYFX TITLE The Emerald City – Year 3000
WINNER: Alexander Chuplygin (GhostImage)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/ghostimage
ALL ENTRIES: www.imaginefx.com/emerald

"I thought the combination of the modern city look and the lasting magic of the giant flying birds could do the trick," says Alexander.



As a child, Alexander loved L Frank Baum's Oz stories – and his passion shows.

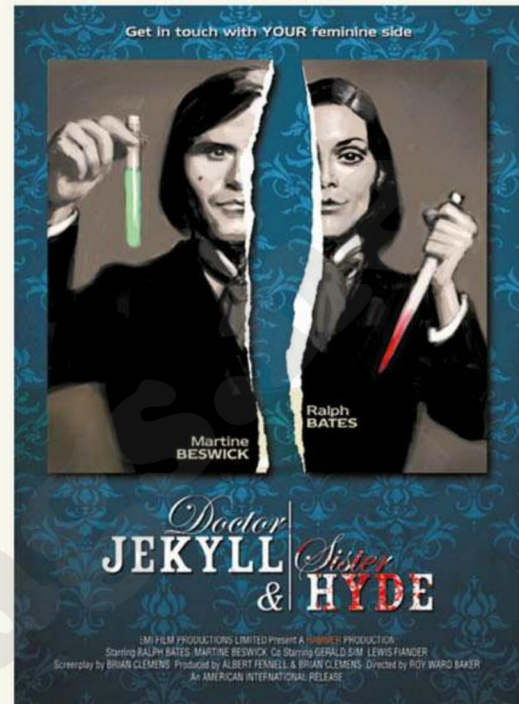
IMAGINEFX CRIT



"This is my favourite composition of the challenge and I love the idea of the Oz quartet (does Toto count?) arriving by air. There might be more detailing work required on various parts, but still, a great job GhostImage!"

DoctorDark

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



MYFX CHALLENGE: Farseer
WINNER: Karen Campbell (Pupuchaku)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/pupuchaku
ALL ENTRIES: www.imaginefx.com/farseer

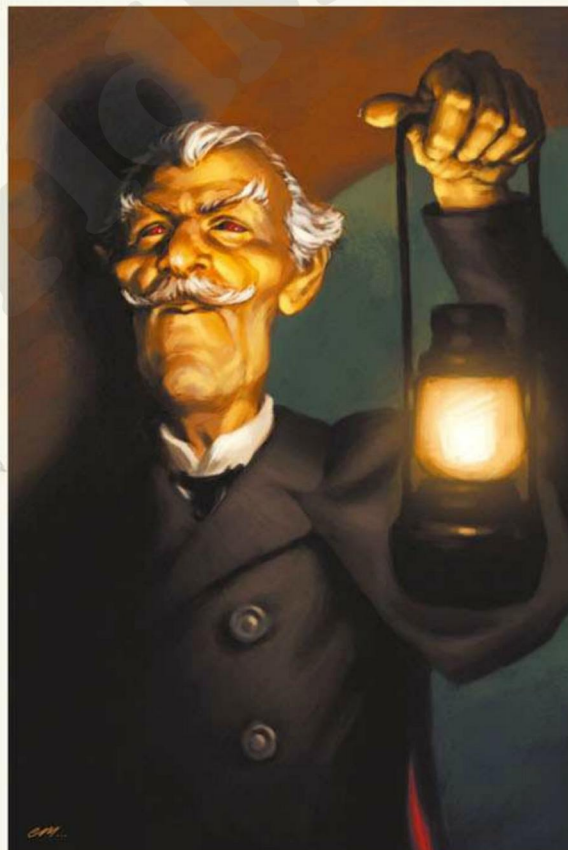


"When I read the challenge, I knew I wanted to do a shaman conjuring up some sort of 'far-seer'. I love the primitive and spiritual feel of druids and shamans, so I kept to more traditional ideas, drawing from Mayan and Native American artwork for inspiration. As I worked on it, I found it more interesting to have the wolf pelt as the far-seer rather than the shaman, thus creating a co-dependency between the two characters."

MYFX TITLE: Bram Stoker's Dracula Tribute
WINNER: Ewan Mactavish (Em...)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/em
ALL ENTRIES: www.imaginefx.com/dracula



"Painting an iconic character like Dracula is both fun and a challenge, and I tried to avoid the most common movie interpretation (typified by Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee) and illustrate him in a way more faithful to the description in Bram Stoker's original novel, when the vampire's first encountered by Jonathan Harker. I wanted to be subtle in the allusions to his vampiric nature, and so kept it to a slight red glow in the eyes, helped by the spooky uplighting from the lamp."



MYFX CHALLENGE: Bad Movie Poster
WINNER: Ewan Mactavish (Em...)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/em
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/ifx-badmovie



"The brief for the challenge was to take something classed as a bad movie and redesign the poster to give it a wider appeal. I twisted that as Hammer's *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*. While hardly a classic of the horror genre, it's a film I have a fondness for. The most famous poster for the movie, however, is bad and doesn't really represent its goofy charm. My concept was to present the character in a way that gave a clue about the fractured nature of the dual personality; and the swapping over of the two lead names, and tagline, to give a hint of dark humour. Also - and this is the real reason for my choice - it was an excuse to draw scream queen Martine Beswick."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, **Ian Dean**, on ian.dean@futurenet.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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Inspirational Q&As

I truly love ImagineFX and issue 85 blew me away. When I saw the cover I squealed, and the cover workshop is just the one I've been waiting for – these are the things I want to work on with my own art.

In any issue I read and reread most of the workshops and the Q&A section. I owe most of my skill to those sections. I've added a picture I did for a friend, to say thank you so much for giving me inspiration, tips and tricks.

I will continue to subscribe for as long as possible because it's a highlight of the month. Love from Norway.

Katrine H Olsen, via email



Happy subscriber Katrine H Olsen, from Norway, sent us her fine painting as a thank you.

Ian replies We love Sakimi Chan's cover too! Glad you found it inspiring. What tips do you want to see in our Q&A section?

Tablet taboo

I've been collecting ImagineFX for over a year and look forward to the notice that it's ready to download in Zinio each month.

However there are far too many articles on the artistic prowess of the iPad, as if it were the only way of creating mobile art. Tablet PCs were around long before the iPad, after all. The HTC Flyer, the Galaxy Note, the HP Slate 500 – I own all of these tablets and love them. The Galaxy Note comes with an active digitiser and pen which far outdoes anything available (stylus-wise) for the iPad.

I'd like to see some articles on doing art on the various Android devices that have active digitisers (there are quite a few). I would find that far more useful right now.

LeShan Jones, via email

Ian replies Hi LeShan, we're always looking for new ways to create art, no matter the brand or make. This issue we review the Samsung Slate 700T (turn to page 104) and our artists look at Microsoft's Surface (see page 20).



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 86?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 59 for details on how to get hold of one.

DLC gets TLC

I just got the tablet version of your magazine and Fantasy Art Essentials. I really enjoy both of them – it's a great format. I'm always reluctant to get magazines, but this is very convenient. The only problem is, I'd like the disc as well. Is this possible? I wouldn't mind paying a little extra.

Bruce Kiltz, via email

Ian replies You're in luck Bruce! As of issue 85 all of our digital editions come with video and links to download the workshop files for our tutorials. See page 33 for more.

Keep art open

I would like to reply to D Ewing's letter in issue 85. The writer mentions his or her concerns about working in open-plan environments for fear of having intellectual property pinched by co-workers.

I can understand the writer's concerns if the environment was one of competition or rivalry, but surely when all the studio/office workers are working on the same project the situation is very much conducive to development and creativity. It's sad to think so cynically about one's co-workers as potential intellectual copyright thieves and, frankly, a little paranoid.

Even Claire replied that "an open-plan office can only help shared creativity" and I agree. I felt a bit aggrieved there was such a pessimistic and unfriendly view of other artists and co-workers in the professional realm. Thanks for listening!

Dominic Kearns, via email

Ian replies I couldn't agree more. Creating art is about trust and learning, an open-plan environment helps enable this.

Paint in Painter

ImagineFX goes from strength to strength, I'm loving some of the new features. Although I've been reading ImagineFX for years I've only really ever dabbled with digital art recently – I've had sketchbooks for most of my life, and used to do large-scale pastel pieces in my younger days. I'd been playing with Photoshop and found it quite overwhelming. It took a lot of effort to get the effects I wanted. I then discovered Painter 12 and got an Intuos5 and my love affair with digital art flourished.

I'm quite surprised at how little of the art featured in the pages of ImagineFX is created in Painter, especially given how much easier I find it in comparison to Photoshop. I'd be interested to know your take on this.

Jay, via email

Ian replies Glad you enjoy the magazine. We'll be running some regular Painter workshops and techniques in future issues. As a fan of Painter, I recommend you enter this year's Rising Stars competition.



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New on the scenery

I'm Emma, I'm 11 years old and I crave art. I love drawing scenery, characters and I sometimes do a bit of animation. I aspire to be an artist or an author, since I do a lot of art based on my favourite book characters. I also write stories and make animation/art based on them.

I recently purchased issue 84 of ImagineFX – the first art magazine I've ever bought. I absolutely love it and am inspired by the art inside it. I felt the need to write to you just to tell you how inspired you've made an 11 year old by this!

I have a question. I use Photoshop Elements 9 for animation and art, and was wondering if there are any better programs? I have heard of Sumo Paint and other types of programs, but perhaps you could recommend one?

I've always wanted a deviantART account; however, the terms and conditions seem confusing to me and I'm wondering how old do you have to be to join and do you have to give dA any personal information?

I find it hard to draw realistic scenery, mainly because of the lighting. Do you have any tips for lighting a forest with different greens and soaking the clearing in bright yellows, as if the sun was looking down on it? Can you please give me any advice for making my scenery art seem more realistic?

Emma, via email

Ian replies So many questions! For cheap painting programs I'd recommend Paint Tool SAI or ArtRage, or you could install the trial version of Painter 12 from this issue's disc. Unfortunately, you need to be 18 years old or over to sign up to a deviantART account. However, you can join the ImagineFX site at www.imaginfex.com. It's friendly and our forumites offer fantastic advice. Can any readers give Emma tips on painting light in a forest?

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RISING STARS 2012

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

With the 15 October deadline creeping closer, this month we speak to past winners about building industry bridges and honing their unique styles



Rising Stars competition is back and, though much as we don't like to brag, this time around we've got more prizes and industry contacts to offer you than ever before.

Encouraging, celebrating and promoting the finest digital artists around the world is at the heart of Rising Stars. That's what ImagineFX did with the first two competitions, and we're aiming to do an even better job this year. That's why we've got rid of the age limit, added categories and are accepting entries that feature traditional mediums as well as digital. Essentially, we're opening the doors to a wider range of Rising Star for 2012.

We've also ramped up the overall prizes to be claimed by the 10 winning entrants, thanks to the fantastic sponsor support of key digital art companies like Corel Painter, NCsoft and Gnomon. There's a whopping £20,000-worth of prizes to be won, but as we explore in the Rising Stars Reunited special over the page, that's only one of the draws to Rising Stars. With an all-star panel of judges from all the key industry areas – publishing, games and film – this may be your chance to get a foot in the door, get your first break, and gain international kudos from your peers.

Turn the page to see what some of the winners of Rising Stars 2011 have got up to in the past year, as they take us through how they've created key images in their portfolio. Then have a look at the categories, on page 39, and make sure you pick the right one.

Remember, your art is going to be seen by art directors and senior artists who are constantly on the lookout for the very best artists. This is your chance to shine! ➔



CRACKED MONOCLE
For this poster Mateusz featured five main characters, an army and a couple of spaceships!

THE PANEL



CB Cebulski
Ex Image Comics, now senior vice president of creative and creator development at Marvel. www.chesterfest.blogspot.co.uk



Sam Didier
The Blizzard Entertainment art director has a track record of spotting new artists on forums and turning them into pros. www.blizzard.com



Jon Schindehette
Senior art director at Wizards of the Coast, he's a great supporter of the art community and his blog is required reading. www.theartorder.com



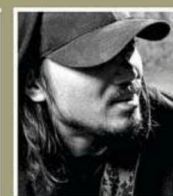
Kevin Jenkins
Kevin's the director of Framestore's art department, which has had BAFTA- and Oscar-nominations. www.framestore-cfc.com



Lou Anders
Chesley Award-winning art director and Hugo-winning editorial director, he hires the best illustrators in the business. www.louanders.com



Christian Alzmann
War of the Worlds, A.I., Star Wars: Episode II... Christian Alzmann worked on all of those films. www.christianalzmann.com



Kekai Kotaki
This multi award-winning artist, who worked on Guild Wars 2, is looking for fresh ideas and a strong concept art portfolio. www.kekaiart.com

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RISING STARS REUNITED

Class of 2011 We catch up with some of last year's winners, see what impact the competition has had on them, and find out what makes them a Rising Star...

L

ast year's Rising Stars winners were a diverse bunch. Expansive concept art, delicate wispy portraits, ink-splattered anarchy – they represented the true variety of digital art. There was one thing that tied them together, though: the tastemakers of the digital art industry deemed them to be the best around, validating all the decisions they had made in their art.

That doesn't mean that they all woke up one morning and found themselves talented, or even focused, artists. Last year Anna Dittmann wasn't even sure in which direction to take her studies, but becoming



a Rising Star crystallised her art ambition. "More than anything," she says, "being part of the feature last year gave me the confidence to keep pushing myself as an illustrator."

She wasn't alone. Once the abundance of



back patting and celebratory rounds of drinks had died down, Karla Ortiz saw the experience as a nod to all the hard work behind each piece

of her art. "Winning can be more important and satisfying than all the increased blog views," she says, "because reaching any life goal involves long hours working and studying your craft."

For Mateusz Ozminski, the results



brought change in his day-to-day life. "One year ago I was an architecture student and today I'm a full-time freelance artist," he tells us. "Focusing on my painting to enter the competition gave me much more patience in my own process." And the stakes were high, as the artist explains: "There was a point where I had to choose to finish my diploma on time or take part in Rising Stars. Winning it confirmed I should always trust my gut."



Baring your abilities to the art aristocracy was a sobering experience for Kabam game studio artist McLean Kendree. Selecting and submitting his

art and seeing it published changed the way he saw his work. "It was the first time I had a body of work published representing just me and not an intellectual property," he says. "It made me more aware of how I want people to see me as an artist."

Karla, also working at San Francisco's Kabam studios, used the whole process as a chance to take stock, view her life's work at a

“One year ago I was an architecture student. Now I'm a full-time freelance artist”

distance. "After I'd heard about becoming a Rising Star it validated some things I was doing right, but more importantly it made me want to tackle the things I felt were not working in my paintings, or that I was hesitant to tackle," she says.

Of course, the criteria for judging such different artists isn't clear-cut. Sure, there's

MATEUSZ OZMINSKI'S STRZYGONIA

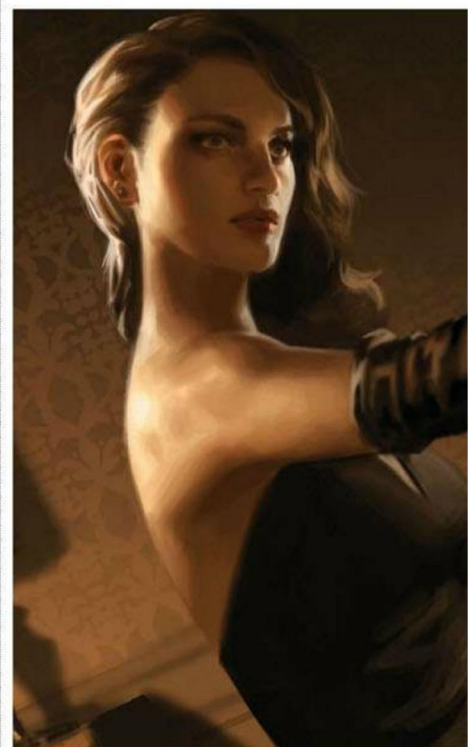


"This was my first ever book cover, and one of the biggest responsibilities I've taken on as an artist. I read the book and I tried to capture an essence of the story – from a few hundred pages to one image. I consider it the most challenging task I've ever faced."

Artist tip Know your source material

"I wanted to use dull colours for a moody fantasy atmosphere, but I changed that due to the driving story. The composition isn't very dynamic, because the book itself is more about tension, not action."

© Faryka Slow





ILLUMINATE

Since last year Anna Dittmann has been in demand, including work for Alex London Fashion House.

originality, technical expertise and the ability to imbue a single image with a whole narrative to consider. But there's also that intangible element that quietly demands your attention, that seduces the viewer's eyes, compels them to linger on the image. Hovering over all of these elements is the artist's style.

Unsurprisingly, all of last year's winners have a different take on what style means, and how to develop it. "You train, you learn techniques and rules, you study, you practise until you can't practise anymore," says Karla, "and slowly but surely these ➡



ASSASSIN

Karla Ortiz is a senior concept artist at Kabam studios in San Francisco, where she's produced work like this piece for various games.

MCLEAN KENDREE'S SWEET TOOTH



"For this I was inspired by some of the imagery in Sam Bosma's work. I wouldn't be good at working in Bosma's style, but I think his subject matter is great and something I'd like to push toward with illustration."

Artist tip Always stay alert for new image ideas

"The idea for this started when I brought a pastry of some kind into class and a classmate commented that I had a sweet tooth. It took me a month or two to get around to starting the piece, though!"



Artist tip Start with the palette

"Being set in a bakery, I thought a warm palette would be the way to go; warm colours make the most sense to me if I'm thinking about ovens, wood, bread... things like that. I dropped the perspective low to give the creature an imposing stature. Furthermore, repetition with variation is something that tends to be a crowd-pleaser, so I had a lot of fun doing that on all the various breads and pastries."

KARLA ORTIZ'S BROOKLYN VICTORY



Brooklyn Victory is an illustration Karla made for the Godfather: Five Families game.

"Brooklyn was the city our players would play the game in," says Karla. "So we wanted to make the Brooklyn Bridge an important aspect of our illustration."



Artist tip Cast your net wide

"For references, we were inspired by New York, by a lot of the pictures we took, and also by different films such as The Godfather series and Road to Perdition. With inspiration from so many great sources, we made a lot of great work for this game."

Artist tip Get the background detail right

"On a trip to New York for reference shots it started to rain one night, and all the window lights in the city became a blur of small squares of yellows, reds, blues and greens. So it was really interesting trying to get that same feeling for this picture, to give you a sense there is a city back there, behind all this mobster business."

ANNA DITTMANN'S MOLT



This was a personal piece where I played with colour and texture. It's meant to be carefree and whimsical so it called for softer, lighter elements. I also wanted to incorporate a flowing pattern to the hair. I was inspired by peacock feathers and chose bright, contrasting colours to make the texture stand out. For this image I used my five main brushes and bright colours on a Soft Light layer to make the patterns detailed and vibrant.

PHOTOSHOP BRUSHES

1. CHALK BRUSH

I use this brush to block in colour, and get the initial feel of the image down.

2. SOFT OVAL BRUSH

This brush is useful to create the feather detail. It provides softness without sacrificing detail.

3. ROUND AIRBRUSH

I use this brush for the hair to make it flow smoothly through the image.

4. STREAKY BRUSH

This brush was great at adding small spots of texture around the eyes.

5. TEXTURED BRUSH

I use this brush to add realism and life to the skin, so it's used later on in the process.



techniques become part of you. That's when you start exploring different ways to approach your art, and that's when style finds you."

Mateusz finds talking about his own style slightly disquieting. "I don't like this kind of question because it forces me to sum up my artistic goals," he says, "and I haven't even settled on what they are." For the architecturally schooled artist, talking about style is presuming his art is settled and sedentary. "I like to read about other artists and where they've taken their influences from, because I'm still gathering my

“When you submit your art for judgment, you can't help but learn a lot”

influences, while practising an effective visual language."

"My style is always developing," offers Anna, "so I wouldn't say I've settled into anything quite yet – but I do have a better idea of where I'm headed." Portraiture is obviously a soft spot for the American artist, "but," she adds, "I enjoy contrasting minimalism and detail, playing around with patterns and simplified shapes."

Having also left a freelancer's life for full-time studio work since last year's contest, McLean sees the pursuit of style as one of shifting expectations, altered every time he learns something new. "My work in the past has been quite cartoony and painterly with lots of bright colours," he says, "but lately I feel like I'm pushing more toward realism



DWARF MADAFKA

Mateusz drew this in 2011, marking a move away from speedpainting to more detailed character development.

than before." A big part of that is due to his recent internship at digital art studio Massive Black, and time spent at The Safehouse Atelier. "I still like bright colours though," he adds.

There's no one formula for being a Rising Star, but there are definite benefits from entering your art work to be seen by leading industry figures – from Marvel's talent scout CB Cebulski to Wizards of the Coast's Jon Schindehette. More important is the opportunity to become a better artist. "When you enter a competition like this, when you submit your art for judgment by your peers, you can't help but learn a lot about yourself as an artist," says Karla. "I would say such moments of honesty and clarity are how we artists best improve."

CATEGORIES

Put your portfolio skills to good use

This year Rising Stars has five categories to choose from, giving you a chance to put your portfolio skills to use, and impress the judges by catering your entry to a single theme. Remember, these guys are used to seeing art with a job, studio, or specific project in mind. So have a look at the options, and choose carefully. If you've got a burning passion for comics, game art, environments, or illustration, there are categories. There's also the broader option of the Corel Painter Master Artist category, for any art that uses the software.

VIDEO GAMES ART

We've teamed up with leading publisher NCsoft to find the very best new concept artists

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Whether you've got a passion for video games concept art or you've got a fresh angle on your favourite games franchise's characters, select your best five games art pieces and enter this group.

For our part we can promise that your art will be seen by the best in the business. Lead concept artist at NCsoft's Guild Wars 2 Kekai says, "For concept art geared to games I want to see variety. I

like composition and storytelling in a piece. It should be captivating enough so that I don't need to be told what's going on right off the bat."

Entries for this category can cover a range of subject matter, environments to characters, or really hone in on particular strengths. "And if you have a company in mind, this is a great chance to tailor your portfolio to its titles," says Kekai.



ILLUSTRATION

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Impress our judges with your technique and originality

If you've got a soft spot for conveying striking environments, or worlds that the viewer instantly wants to inhabit, or indeed taking your tablet outside for plein air painting, then this is the category for you.

Fantasy or sci-fi, photo manipulation or striking speed painting, traditional, digital or mixed media - we want to see original environments that will impress. Senior VFX art director at ILM, Christian Alzmann: "There is nothing better than a little competition to bring your work to the next level."

Each of the 10 winners of this year's Rising Stars will receive a year's subscription to Gnomon's impressive online library. You can have a good look at what you might win at www.thegnomonworkshop.com.



MASTER ARTIST

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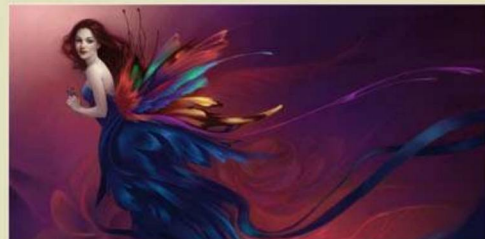
This year ImagineFX and our friends at Corel have setup the Corel Painter Master Artist category to see what the Rising Stars of digital art can do with Corel's flagship digital art software. As well as becoming Rising Stars, the winner and runner-up will be granted Painter Master status by Corel.

The only criteria for entry are that art must be created exclusively in Corel Painter - the rest is up to you. If you want to send in a broader range of examples of your art, unhindered by the restrictions of the other categories, this may be the choice for you.

Don't worry if you're not familiar with the software. We've got a free trial edition of Painter 12 on the DVD. Once you've fired that up, why not download the exclusive online Painter 12 workshop from artist Simon Dominic at www.imaginefx.com/simon12.

You can dazzle our star judges with a five-piece portfolio entry that really varies in technique and style.

Digital readers, click this link to get your hands on a free trial of Painter 12: www.corel.com/risingstars.



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HOW TO ENTER

Entrants are invited to submit five digital or traditional pieces of portfolio work and a short biography. We hope to be seeing thousands of amazing pieces of artwork, so make sure your five pieces of artwork all fit into one email, being no bigger than 10MB in total. Remember to mark all entries with your chosen category.

Include a photograph of yourself, please don't send original works and make sure that you have copies to spare of anything submitted.

The deadline is midnight GMT, 15 October 2012

Email your entries to:
risingstars@imaginefx.com

Post your entries on a disc to:
**Rising Stars 2012
ImagineFX
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UK**

For more information go to
www.imaginefx.com/risingstars2012

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2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded.
3. Entries must be received by 15 October 2012, which is the closing date.
4. All entries will be judged by the ImagineFX team and an independent panel (see list). Their decision is final.
5. The winners must agree to allow their images to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional or marketing material. All entrants retain the copyright to their art.
6. ImagineFX and Future Publishing reserve the right to postpone the selection of the winners indefinitely if the standard of quality is not to the required level.
7. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork.
8. All information is correct at the time of going to press. The competition prizes and the prize value may be subject to change.

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Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones, concept artist



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Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Paco Rico Torres



Paco is a freelance illustrator living in Spain who's produced art for several card games, magazines, books and role-playing games.

www.pacorico.blogspot.com

Nick Harris



Gloucestershire-based Nick went digital in 2000 after 18 years working with traditional methods. He works mainly on children's illustrations.

www.nickillus.com

Sean Andrew Murray



Sean is a concept artist and illustrator. He's currently putting the finishing touches to his first illustrated book, *Book of Wizards*.

www.seanandrewmurray.com

Jon Hodgson



Jon Hodgson is art director at Cubicle 7 Entertainment as well as an experienced freelance illustrator and ArtRage evangelist.

www.jonhodgson.com

Remko Troost



Born in Amsterdam, Remko is a senior concept artist and illustrator with several years' experience in the film and video game industries.

remkotroost.com

Matt Dixon



Matt first created artwork for a video game back in 1988, and has since worked for Blizzard. His pin-up art can be seen in his book *Girls On Top*.

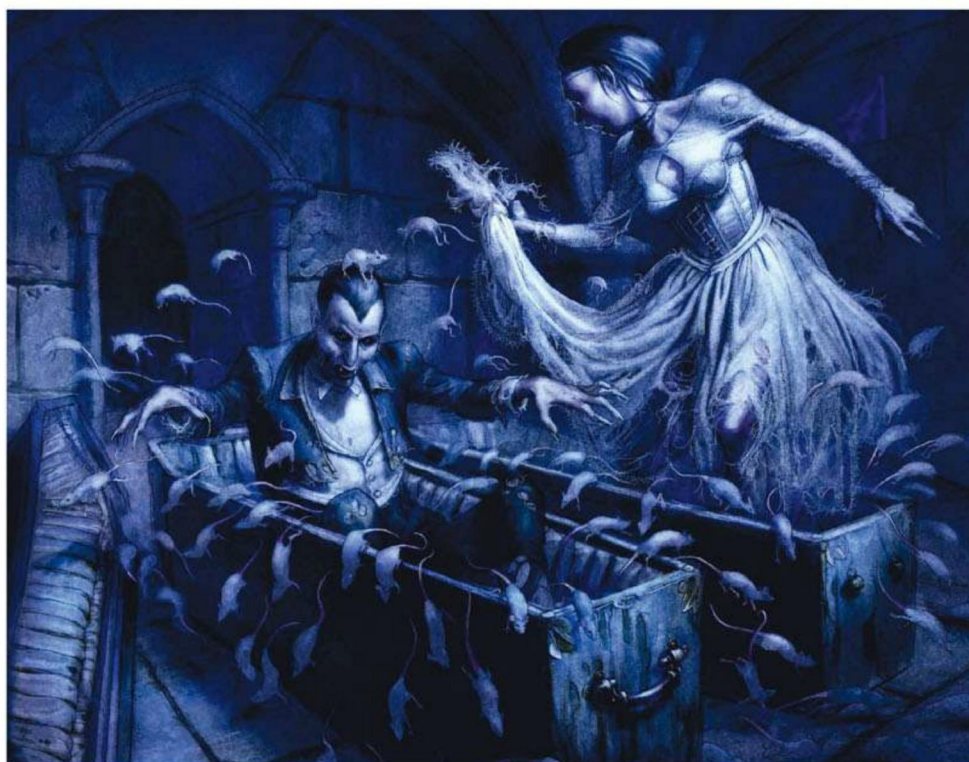
mattidixon.co.uk

Paul Tysall



After four years as ImagineFX's art editor, working with the elite of the digital art world, Paul is now a busy freelance designer and illustrator.

www.tysall.com



Question

How do I paint a humorous vampire scene without drifting into cartoon territory?

Edward Helse, Sweden

Answer

Nick replies



The range of interpretation for vampires and their tales is broader today than ever – from hypnotic Dracula, through ravaging beasts, to tortured souls fighting their own kind. Humour and horror go hand in hand in many modern takes on the tale. There's no need to drift into cartoon representation here. The genre is ripe for humorous twists.

The first thing to decide is which variety of vampire you fancy. I go with the traditional besuited Dracula type that I grew up watching in old Bela Lugosi and

When Dracula talked about the "children of the night", he meant wolves, not mice!

Christopher Lee films. Now I take a few minutes to ponder the sorts of issues his lifestyle he might encounter these days. Storage space? Recycling demands (think limited blood supplies)? Dental problems, even? Taking the first two ideas I do some sketching. I'm thinking that while the vampire body may be fine in a dirt-filled coffin for years, would their clothes avoid the attention of vermin? Would they be upset to find their cool look ruined?

And how about vampires feeding off each others' blood in a circle? Kind of on permanent bypass? It might just work...

Step-by-step: Set up a supernatural wardrobe malfunction



1 Sense of humour is a personal thing, but if you can find the right combination of situation, character and pose/facial expression to suit your brand of humour, you can usually make an image work for laughs. First decide what elements are essential ingredients to explain what's going on.



2 Although I sketch the vampires realistically, I exaggerate their postures to better explain what's going on. The classic elements of coffin, crypt and subdued lighting should help set the scene. That provides the springboard for you to concentrate on delivering your message – in this case attempted humour.



3 The female vampire's pose is key to showing what's going on so I work on that first, plotting out the main folds of material as well. I can have fun dropping the mice in later. I don't think of the mouse on male Vampy's head until much later – yet I think that fits in really well with his Tommy Cooper-like pose.

Question

My hands always seem slightly stiff. What can I do to make them look full of life?

Steve Wright, England

Answer

Remko replies



Hands are probably one of the most complicated (yet fun) parts of the body to draw and to master.

Observing hands and finding references plays a major role in mastering them.

You can never draw enough hands, and they are almost like little creatures on their own – think of Thing from The Addams Family if you don't believe me! Between my work I often scribble hands here and there, on my phone or on pieces of paper. This constant attention enables me to better understand how they work, such as how they grab something, manipulate their environment, how the fingers wrap around a sword handle, or how the knuckles are lined up when making a fist.

When making a fist, it's not only the fingers that fold but the palm as well. If you close your hand, the little finger goes first and the part of the hand where the little finger is attached folds towards the inside of the palm, too.

I sometimes put my left hand into a certain position and draw it with my right hand if I'm not sure of how the hand should be depicted in any given situation. Don't forget that on the back of your hand, in between the wrist and the fingers, you can often see the bones under the skin as well as some veins passing over the bones. You'll probably also notice the wrinkles on your knuckles and the skin colour variations, depending on how thin or thick the skin is on certain parts. Taking all this into account can breathe a lot of life into your hand drawings.

To make the hands of your characters look less stiff, try not to use too many straight lines while drawing them. Have you noticed that knuckles, for example, aren't perfectly lined up next to each other and that your fingers don't all have the same length. Try drawing them in outlines before painting and colouring them. Do this over and over again, until you understand their shapes.



You can see a couple of force lines, drawn in red, that I made to better understand the way they work. As you can see, knuckles or phalanges aren't perfectly lined up next to each other.



Try putting your hand in all kinds of positions while drawing them fast. It's a great exercise to better understand hands. Try different lighting, too.

Artist's secret

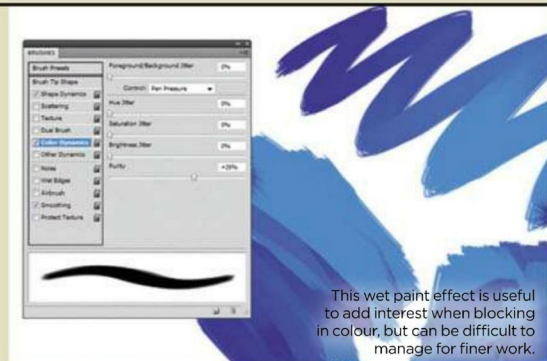
PEN AND PAPER

I like to have some paper handy around my Wacom and PC, so sometimes when I'm having a hard time on a subject – hands for example – I can quickly scribble the subject a few times. Once I feel that I've mastered its shapes, I get back to my screen and go on painting. I avoid having too many windows open at the same time – it's fun and rewarding jumping from one media to another!

Question

How can I set a Photoshop brush to emulate acrylic or oil?

Lloyd Andrews, England



Answer

Matt replies



When people think of an oil paint look, they picture a heavy application of opaque colour with a distinct wet blend effect. Begin by selecting an appropriate brush tip. I'm using Charcoal 59 from the default Natural Brushes brush set. Set Shape Dynamics to be controlled by Pen Pressure, with a diameter of around 50 per cent. This will emulate the bristles splaying out as pressure is applied. To achieve the colour mix effect, set Color Dynamics to also be controlled by Pen Pressure. Photoshop will now blend between your foreground and background colours based on pressure.

That brush gives an effective wet paint feel, but isn't easy to work with, so try creating a brush with a drier feel. A less-dense brush tip will give softer edges. I have chosen Spray 68 again from the Natural Brushes set. This time set Opacity to be controlled by Pen Pressure, and set a small amount of Opacity Jitter. In addition, set Texture on, choosing a light texture set to Color Burn mode. These settings makes the application of colour more predictable, and the soft edges of the brush make it straightforward to blend tones.



Experiment with different textures because they can change the feel of a brush. If a texture's too strong, you can rein it in using the Depth slider.

Artist's secret

MAKE LOTS OF BRUSHES!

Work with a variety of brushes. However cool your favourite brush is, it'll always produce the same basic mark. Painting with a selection of different brushes will help stop any obvious repetition of marks and add extra texture to your work.

Question

How do I show my character dancing without them looking strange?

Jo Styles, US

Answer

Paco replies

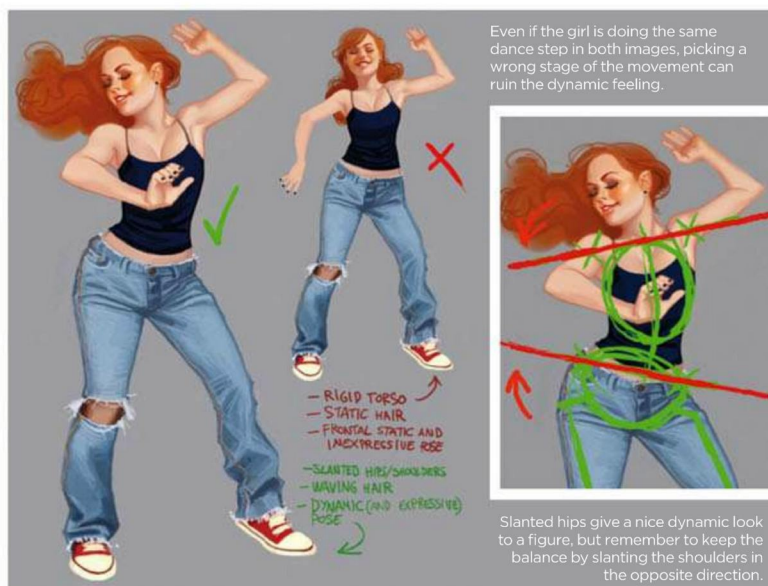


When you paint a character in movement such as dancing, you have to depict the moment that best defines 'dance'. Think of a movement as a chain of images. There are some of those images that represent the nature of the movement better than others. If you paint a movement at a random point, it'll likely look strange.

How do you find the stage that best defines that movement? It's hard to explain, it's something that you know instinctively.

Usually it's the moment where the movement is most intense. Watch videos of people dancing and view them frame by frame, I'm sure that you'll easily spot the frames that define the movement best.

Avoid rigid or frontal poses. Instead, slant hips, shoulders and necks, and paint moving hair or clothes. Look for dynamic poses, even if they're more complex to depict. These will make it clear to the viewer that the character is in the middle of a dance step, and not just in some weird pose.



Question

Have you got any tips on how to kick start the creative process?

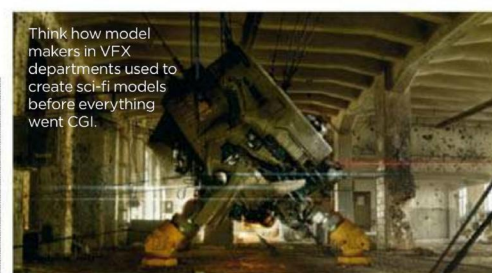
Polly O'Neil, Ireland

Answer

Paul replies



The method I favour the most is butchering photos. This is for a few reasons. One, the process of gathering source material gets the imagination going. Two, you've got a starting point – something that immediately removes all that white. Three, you can choose to take your photo-manipulation to a certain loose stage and use it as a thumbnail for a painting, or stick with it and create a photo-illustration as shown here, or even combine both approaches if, like me, you're a fan of mixed media illustration.



Think how model makers in VFX departments used to create sci-fi models before everything went CGI.

I treat each photo element like a model kit, snapping off the parts I like the look of and gluing them to something else that's cool-looking. The main point is to focus on the design and create interesting shapes.

Question

How can I paint realistic water in wet swampy environments such as wastelands, flooded fields and swamps?

Boris Daiki, Japan

Answer

Remko replies



Painting water in a realistic way is tricky because of its organic and indefinable shape, reflections and transparency. I first try to understand water and the endless shapes it comes in. I find some online references, photos that I've taken or images in books. I also like to observe bodies of water whenever I get the opportunity.

Swamp water often comes in more desaturated brownish and khaki greenish colours. Due to the mud and dirt that's in the water, it's often opaque and so might reflect the light less. Furthermore, dirty-looking foam might appear where the water comes in contact with an object.

I start with a basic Round brush with Opacity set to 90 and Flow to 60 and then start to paint the water shapes by making oval movements. I begin with the darkest values and then slowly work my way up to the light. In this image I start with a dark brown/green colour and then add the lighter khaki green and beige colours above it. Finally, I add some highlights on top of some little wavy shapes – but not too much because I don't want it to look too shiny.

Don't paint too many reflections on the water. This will ensure that you'll produce a matt, dusky look, which is somewhere between mud and water.



I use brownish and greenish desaturated colours to give my water a swampy feel. I also added a bit of mist to give it a mysterious feeling. No way out of this swamp!

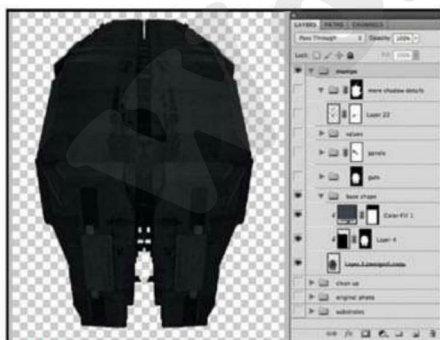


Artist's secret

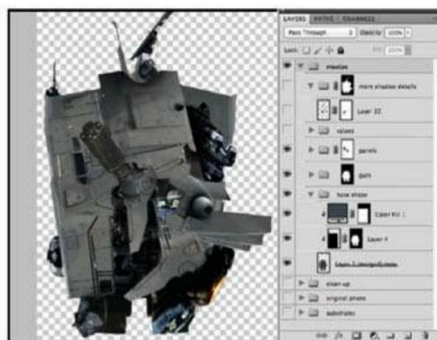
THE FLUIDITY TOOL.

This tool is useful for manipulating organic shapes. It works as if you're sculpting from inside your image. I select the part of the image I want to work on and go to Effects > Fluidity. Here a new window opens up where you'll find several tools to sculpt your material. It's handy for giving your water some little waves, for example.

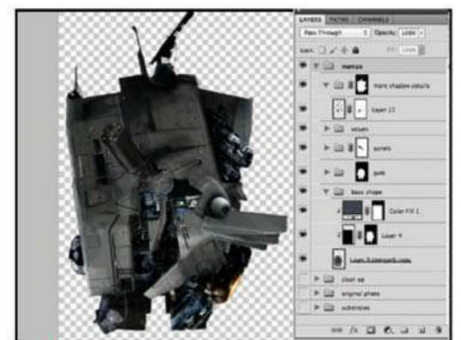
Step-by-step: Isolate the design process using Smart Layers



1 Start by finding an object I like the outline of, add this to a layer, and mask off any bits I don't need. Then I right-click that layer and choose Convert to Smart Object. Now when I double-click that target layer Photoshop opens it in a separate window.



2 From here I create three groups: the Base Shape (effectively the silhouette); Guts, where I assemble the mechanical looking innards, using a group mask of the Base Shape to contain everything; and Panels, where I construct the outer shell.



3 I'm going to see this image through to a final illustration, so I add another group: Values. This has duplicate versions of the below groups merged together. One is heavily darkened and the other is then lightened, then I paint onto a Layer Mask to suggest shadows and highlights.

Question

How should I paint a realistic and atmospheric trail of smoke?

Jimmy McGoldrick, Ireland

Answer Paco replies



The key to painting a realistic smoke trail is to combine the internal and external light of the smoke. What I call the external light is all the light that's seen on the surface of the smoke (light from the sun) and the internal light is the light that comes from within the smoke itself (the light coming from, for example, the heat from a rocket's flame).

A rocket flame produces a high amount of light that's usually yellow and orange. That light goes down the smoke trail and illuminates it from the interior until the

light fades away. This creates a bright orange pillar of smoke right under the rocket that gradually blends to grey. The external light illuminates that grey part, so it should be affected by any light source surrounding it.

Furthermore, the smoke isn't totally transparent, so even if it's illuminated from within, the parts where the smoke is thicker won't let all the light from the flame through, which means you would see them as grey or at least slightly darker. Knowing that, and using a proper brush to depict the smoke itself, painting a rocket trail is relatively straightforward.



By combining the grey colour of the smoke and orange hues of the flame you can create a nice eye-catching rocket trail.



Notice how the light within the smoke trail fades as the rocket moves further away.



Artist's secret

SMOKE BRUSH

Using a decent brush can make the process of painting smoke a lot easier. I used this one almost exclusively for this image - it's one of the basic brushes of SA1, but creating (or downloading) a similar brush for Photoshop should be pretty easy.

Step-by-step: Illustrate a rocket trail



1 I start by painting the key elements in the scene: the space shuttle and the launch tower. I want to show the top of the launch tower, so I paint the entire length of it, but because it's going to be hidden by the smoke I don't put too much detail into the structure. Notice that even if the flame isn't painted yet, the top of the tower is illuminated as if it were there.



2 I start to paint the grey smoke, which is illuminated by the external light. I create a base by tapping the brush (a special brush with irregular edges), which produces a nice smoke texture on the canvas. Then over that texture I define the smoke shapes more accurately. Remember that smoke has highlights and shadows, just like any solid object.



3 Over that base I add the flame and the smoke that's illuminated from within. Because the flame is the brightest part of the image I paint it white. Indeed, it should be the only pure white part on the painting. I then blend it to yellow and orange, and paint the smoke extending the white into the yellow, the yellow into the orange, and so on.



4 After adding more detail, I simply create a new layer, set the mode to Soft Light, and paint a blurred orange stain over the flame and the smoke that's illuminated by it. I repeat the process in a new layer, using light yellow instead and set the layer mode to Overlay. That introduces more saturation to the colours and makes the flame look brighter and more intense.

Question

I want to put my characters in an urban environment. Any tips?

Eddie Carter, US



Horizontal and diagonal lines on the characters in the foreground contrast with the more vertical lines in the background.

Some angles lead the eye to the main subject, while others enhance the claustrophobic feel.



Answer

Sean replies



This is a composition problem and to solve it properly you have to manage all your elements, and push back details that interfere with what's important.

Start by concentrating on the placement of the characters in the foreground first, but be conscious of leaving some breathing room for the environment behind it. Avoid trying to squish your characters down into one corner or off to the side, because they're still the focal point of the image.

Once you're happy with the composition of your characters, work your buildings into the space that

you have left, use overlapping to create a sense of space and be very aware of tangents. In my image, The Offering, I make sure that my buildings go off into space at different angles, helping to accentuate the feeling of depth through the use of perspective. The characters overlap the buildings, and the buildings overlap each other. I also use atmospheric perspective to push the detail further into the background to avoid having the image look too busy. There are a few areas in this image where I flirt with some potentially dangerous tangents, but I do this specifically to create a sense of tension.

Artist's secret

POINT TO YOUR SUBJECT

Use things like tree branches, roof lines, receding rivers and roads to help point the viewer in the right direction. You can be as subtle or as ham-fisted about it as you want, as long as you lead the eye back to the meat of your composition.

Question

How can I make my character look like he's battling a storm?

Antonia Adams, England

Answer

Matt replies



The best way to establish a convincing dynamic pose is to act out the character's action in front of a mirror. I hunker down and place my feet far apart to lower my centre of gravity, with my body leaning into the wind. I place my hands across my chest for greater protection and warmth, using my shoulder to try and deflect the force of the imagined wind.

With a pose decided upon, turn your attention to ways to further communicate the power of the storm to the viewer. The more cues you can give, the more convincing your storm will be. Set a direction for the wind and ensure that any loose material and costume elements are correctly affected. Air-borne debris or raindrops are very useful to help sell the idea of strong wind to your audience.



Pay attention to your facial expression as you act out the pose. The stance will say what the character is doing, while the expression will help to explain why.



Choose ground detail that will bend in the wind and add flying debris to establish this is more than just a gentle breeze.

Question

Is it possible to add vibrant colour without repainting my image?

Stephanie Bould, England



The Selective Color Adjustment Layer is a great way to revive key colours in your image

Answer

Paul replies



There's always room for a little colour correction at the end of the digital painting process. When correcting artwork I always make my image adjustments as Adjustment Layers – which are located at the bottom of the Layers window – so I can go back and tweak them.

I choose the Selective Color option from the Context menu, and then from the Colors drop-down

list I identify those hues that dominate my painting. The next step can baffle digital artists because the Selective Color editor uses CMYK sliders, so a certain amount of trial and error is required before things fall into place. But you may get lucky first time, so try it out and see how you get on with the process.

Let's say that my image contains lots of blues – too many in fact. I select Blue from the list and then increase the Cyan values, and decrease the Magenta and some of the Yellow. In most cases decreasing the Black slider will result in that hue becoming purer, but I need to be mindful that the overall image doesn't become too flat. As I work my way down the Color list I can get away with adding quite substantial percentages to each slider, but when I get to the Neutrals and Blacks the numbers tend to become smaller.

Question

How can I apply convincing patterns to my character's clothes?

Paul Thomas, US

Answer

Sean replies



There are three key steps to creating convincing-looking patterning. First, remember that the pattern must conform to the contours of the clothing itself. Second, make sure the pattern is affected by light and shadow in the same way the base clothing is. Third, remember that patterns don't have to be flat – they could be embroidered sections or patches sewn into the clothing.

I usually draw clothing patterns into my pieces at the pencil sketch phase. I try to find reference of interesting patterns to use as inspiration. You can find a lot on the internet, or in copyright-free Dover Books.

Practise with simple patterns. Visualise how the surface of the clothing undulates and folds back on to itself. Now draw a simple horizontal line pattern across the surface. This should give you an idea of how to apply more complex patterns on a similar surface. Apply trim patterns to the edges – these are easy to do and can help you work up to more complex patterning.

Be sure that you apply lighting appropriately. If your main field is blue and your pattern shapes are red, then you wouldn't want a blue highlight on the red parts of your pattern. You can use Overlay or Screen layers to achieve the right colours for your lighting.

Drawing from life is the most effective way to learn how to render clothing patterns. If you're applying a pattern using photo sources, try using the Warp or Liquify tool to make your patterns appear as if they're lying on the surface of the clothing.



I apply a pattern to this character's clothing after he's fully painted. Doing this in a convincing manner adds depth and interest to the character design.



Here I use a lot of trim patterns for the robes. It helps to show layering and is a good way to add detail without overwhelming the image.

Question

Can you help me paint an ancient, overgrown tomb?

Michael Davies, US



Layers are great for building elements up over your structure. It's up to you how much you disguise, allowing the viewer to imagine what's underneath.

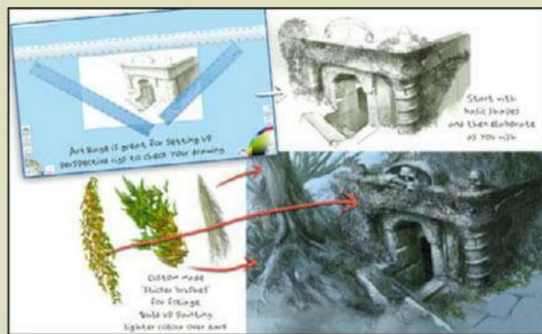
Answer

Nick replies



Our local cemetery doesn't qualify as ancient, being only a few hundred years old at most. Yet I head there first to help get me in the mood and grab some texture reference and ideas. Don't dismiss your local bone-yard out of hand just because it isn't perfect. Although I considered Googling images for tombs from ancient Egypt, Mayan and even Grecian history, my initial response to this relates more to creaky, old Hammer Horror films, set in Victorian times. You can blame my misspent youth.

I still want it to look seriously aged and neglected. First, mark out some simple shapes to define basic perspective. I stick loosely to that framework, breaking up lines to suggest wear and damage to the masonry, and blocks having shifted over time. Break up the lines more by burying parts below encroaching plant life, broken masonry, landslides, sand... whatever best suits the imagined history of your particular tomb. Enjoy building up stone and other textures – maybe hint at something lurking deep within the dark entrance!



Some simple perspective can make your creation feel more solid and afford you the freedom to show masonry that's fallen out of true alignment.



Go out with your camera: real-world references will help you create your ancient burial site.

Artist's secret

CREATE A CONVINCING PATTERN



Start by sketching a pattern on a new layer above the clothing. Then fill in the areas that need to be a solid colour on that same layer, changing it to a multiply layer with 60 per cent opacity. Adjust the colour of the

pattern and then, in a new layer, render the highlights. Finally, use the Eraser on a low opacity to fade out some areas of the solid pattern.



Question

How can I create an army made up of monsters in Painter?

Nigel Dixon, England

Answer

Jon replies

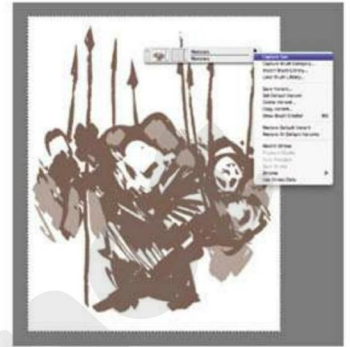
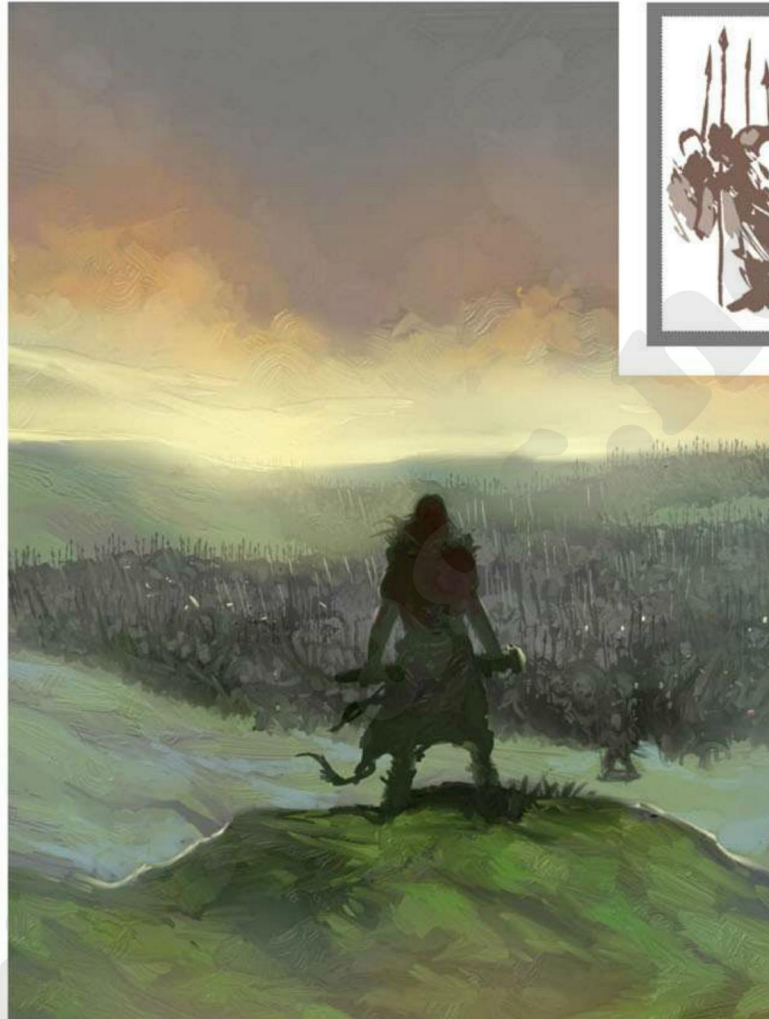


Individual details are far less important here than getting that feeling of a mass of bodies. You need a convincing backdrop for this monster legion. A solid feeling of depth is important. You could just paint in the horde of monsters, building the big shapes first, then breaking those down into smaller ones, until you're detailing individuals. Alternatively, make a brush in Painter to do some of this work. Note that creating repeating hordes of things with this technique requires just as much work as just painting it, but it's an interesting technique.

Start by sketching out a unit of three or four monsters in a new canvas, on a white background. Select the whole thing. In the Brushes menu choose Capture Brush Category and this will copy your selected brush's characteristics into a whole new category. Click that new category. Then hit Capture Dab, which will set the new brush to put down the drawing you have made of monsters with each stroke.

Have a fiddle around in the Brush Creator to get good spacing, squeeze levels and so on. Put down small monsters in the background of your image and work forwards using darker colours. Try to follow the landscape.

Then it's into postproduction: adding in loads of little details, adjusting the image where patterns are too obviously repeated, adding atmospheric perspective for depth and generally putting the work in to make it look more polished and less potato print.



Here we see the rough drawing used to make the brush dab for our monsters. It can be quite rough, and work all the better.

Rather than trying to individually draw or paint a million monsters, this image relies on narrative and a lot of atmosphere to support that aim.

Step-by-step: Making hordes of monsters

1 Using the brush you've made and a lower mid-tone, paint in a bunch of monsters streaming over the horizon in waves, following the contours of the terrain. Use less pressure in the distance, more pressure towards the viewer to make larger monsters in the foreground. Think about background, mid-ground and the foreground.



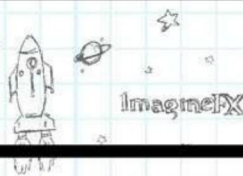
2 Vary the colour and pressure to add some detail, using the same brush. It doesn't matter if the potato prints don't read exactly right. Just build up a mass of repeating shapes. Remember any happy accidents, and incorporate what generated those into your workflow. In addition, use that to inform how you produce future custom brushes.



3 This is the important part of the process, which brings uniqueness to the stamped-down repetitive brush marks. Use your regular painting brushes and add detail to give the illusion of a crowd. More detail to the front rows, less going back. Spray on some light airbrushing towards the horizon for some atmospheric perspective.



Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



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“I’m not happy with my sci-fi Orphelia – I need help with her hair, anatomy, lighting and composition... oh, and the sense of floating isn’t right” *Martin Nancekievill*

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

The Mentor

Bill Corbett



Bill is a UK-based freelance artist who produces illustrations for media groups, public relations companies, small businesses and private clients. He's also a regular contributor to ImagineFX's Q&A section.
www.billcorbett.co.uk

I think both the painting and the idea behind it – a Blade Runner-esq android posed as John Everett Millais's Orphelia – are great. From speaking to Martin, it's clear that he's keen on improving the character's partially submerged hair, and working on anatomical aspects of the character, such as her collarbone and facial features. Passing some more ideas back and forth, we've also highlighted some other areas to work on. There are four major points to consider that link together: composition, structure, technique and detail.

Martin's clear direction and detailed back-story helps immensely in pinpointing some changes to the image. He's told me that he wanted to capture the sadness of an android that's past her sell-by date. He's also referenced several sci-fi films as well as a pre-Raphaelite painting. In fact, this abundance of detail may give us our first step: trying to make the canvas serve the details better.

Each of the four steps that Martin and I take together have been laid out in the following pages. Let's see how we got on!

1. Composition

There's a lot of detail in this painting's back story – it needs a fittingly sized canvas size.

2. Structure

The image had anatomical strengths, but also weaknesses. We need to tackle that android's clavicles!

3. Technique

Again, there are technical strengths here, but we need to work on the submerged hair.

4. Detail

Once we've touched on the main points above, detail around the image will bring added focal points.





Part one: Composition – creating room for development and balance



Martin has already put a lot of thought into his composition, so I think we can enhance what he's done here without breaking anything. One of the first things that struck me was that this looked like a cropped image, so we need to give this image a bigger background. This will enhance the composition, but it'll also help us work on the additional points that we'll come to later. Here's how slightly increasing the canvas size benefits the image...

Bill's first paintover



1 First, there'll be more room for little elements that will enhance the composition and add to the story. For example, there's room for a strange floating object in the foreground. This could become a signifier of the overall narrative, or an ambiguous item that adds to the image's intrigue.

2 Increasing the canvas size will give Martin more room to add more robotic detail to the far left, as well as indicate the android's hips, for a more sensual appeal to his android. By experimenting with compositional maps you can establish the basic form of the piece before painting the details.



3 As with all processes of discovery, we struck upon an essential compositional change out of sequence, later on in the Art Class. By rotating the image 10 degrees, we were able to centralise the figure, but also add to her sense of floating. This is turn made the liquid more believable. Getting the composition just so enabled us to add detail and harmony to the painting.

In conversation...



Martin: Wow, that's so cool, Bill. By simply resizing the canvas I can immediately see that I can correct some of the awkwardness that's present in my original composition.

Bill: Now you can develop the android Ophelia story – find the props to bring out the composition. Remember, not too much and try and strike on the right balance.

Martin: I still feel as if the android isn't

quite sitting right in the image. There's more room for detail, but the floating isn't quite right. Help!

Bill: Try rotating the image by around 10 degrees. This will help drag the head back to the waterline.

Martin: Great idea. In this rough of what she's like after rotation, she looks like she's got the right buoyancy for the fluid that she's in. Now that she's settled correctly, the image is less jarring to my eyes. Thanks Bill. We're making progress!

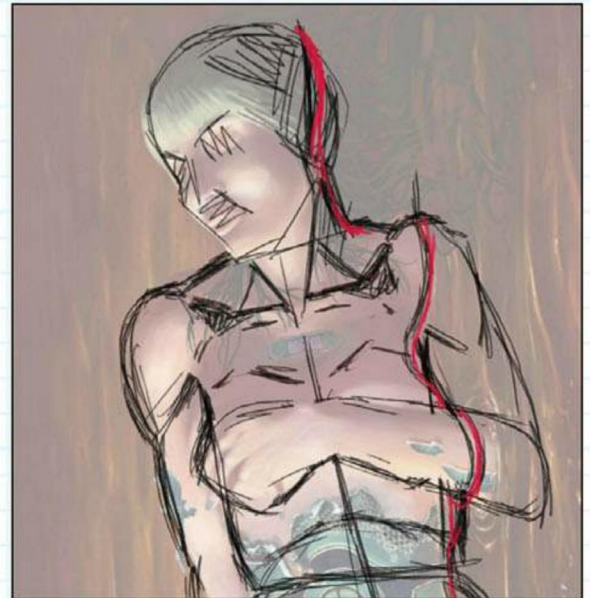
Part two: Structure – correcting the anatomy issues



Before we got to rotating the image, we focused on her anatomy. As Martin mentioned, his initial painting combined different photo references from a range of sources, including his own arm. This can be an invaluable help for getting your character's anatomy right, but it's never foolproof, and problems that arise in the process of painting may need to be addressed. There were a few niggles around the girl's clavicles, the exposed shoulder and possibly the depth of her chest just after the top of her breasts.

1 There are several ways to tackle anatomy. When your character is positioned in an unusual way, such as lying down, half-submerged in water, one way to identify inaccuracies is to rotate the canvas 45 degrees into an upright position. Add a white layer at around 60 per cent opacity, then roughly draw over your image and correct the line structure. You'll find it easier to spot any issues this way.

2 Once you've drawn the whole of the girl, and not just the part that's above water, you'll have identified the main weaknesses. Then go back to photo references, for the neck area, especially the clavicles and Sternocleidomastoid muscles (search engines are priceless when people start name-checking specific muscles!).



In conversation...



Martin: In my original painting I initially worked from a low-resolution reference shot, but I think it's with the shading and shadowing where my anatomy weaknesses

really shows up. What do you think?

Bill: If you focus in on the final touches of anatomy first, you'll go round and round in circles without actually changing the thing that really needs to change. Shading can be



altered, but get the bones and muscles making sense first.

Martin: For the hand I referred to a photo of my own arm, and

I think this is stronger than the collarbone and face. But short of going back and starting again, I've found that rotating the canvas and using the white layer approach really helped get a firm feel for her anatomy. Thanks!



Part three: Technique – developing the hair and water



Martin had a strong sense of colour and a good light source in his image, but it was necessary to spend some time looking at the reflections on the water and the character's hair both above and below the liquid. I would usually wait until the end to develop the hair, especially when dealing with it floating underwater.

What I tried to get across to Martin was the basis of water reflection: how the reflection is cut through by the movement of the liquid and capturing the light on those movements (as well as the shadow of the head). I also discussed how the clumps of hair became little islands bridged by strands in the fluid. As with every process we hit difficulties, so we went down the route of less reflection and more transparency in the liquid, to give the hair more fluidity in the end.



1 When tackling hair under water, smooth out the liquid first. Add a little shadow into the water around the girl with a low Opacity layer. Keep the highlights of the hair low-key, first getting a feel for the flow of the hair in the liquid, and then building on the hair's highlights. Rough out the dark and mid-tone colours of the hair in and out of the liquid, on a new layer.



2 Add the reflections of the body and main part of the hair to the water using another low Opacity layer, then merge these three layers together into one layer above the main layer. Use the Eraser to cut out current lines in the new layer. Then it's time to add details and highlights. Finally, use the Warp and Smudge brushes around the figure to really add interest to the reflections.

In conversation...



Martin: Out of all the parts that we've looked at so far, the hair has probably sucked up



most of my time. I'm finding it really hard to keep focus and think about the shape and form of something as chaotic as submerged hair!

Bill: Paint it as if you can't see any hair beneath the surface, but keep the

area dark and work on the flow of the liquid. You'll find it a lot easier to depict the flow of the hair once you've nailed this aspect.

Martin: I'm not sure that the floating clumps of hair work with this image

and they're not easy to paint either. So I've taken your advice and painted over the image once again, but this time I kept the hair just below the waterline. I think this works a lot better and, as it goes, is a lot easier than the way I was approaching it.

Part four: Detail – creating focus points to develop the story



Detail is purely about developing areas of interest for the viewer: small tears in the skin and bits of exposed circuitry to give the girl some sense of purpose. Other details were needed to give the composition a little more balance and bring the story along. My general rule of thumb on detail is that it's there to embellish the image, but not there to distract the viewer from the purpose of the painting. It's the little things that catch the eye that can make a painting interesting, and they in themselves are a painting within a painting (if that makes sense). Attention to detail can make the major difference to the finished article.



1 Look at the image, with all the previous steps out of your mind. Think of the balance of the image. The main bulk of the image should be finalised by now, so really we're looking at the dead spaces in the image: the background, the immediate foreground. Would they benefit from details, such as android debris? Experiment!



2 With a striking female android as the main focus, there's no risk of the debris detail overshadowing anything, so go to town! For ideas of futuristic debris it's a good idea to take from what you've already done. Look at the android's body, the patterns, and shapes. Change the colour a little and just see what works.



3 By now you've probably been staring at the image for several hours. Adding detail may begin to seem tedious. A simple trick is to mirror the image and paint it from that view, then mirror it back for your next session. You'll become aware of things that might not look right, and the novelty of the flipped image may inspire you.

In conversation...



Martin: She just isn't lying right... any ideas of how to make her look more natural in the water?

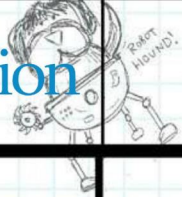
Bill: Find the floating points with this

grid drawn from the head's position in the fluid (image 1). Then you'll see where to bring the hair to the liquid surface (image 2).

Drawing the grid I realised that the fluid and the girl don't sit right so I straightened the wake line, so the

shoulder would sink more into the fluid relative to the head's position in the liquid. I think this might be one of the main reasons it's been hard to get the anatomy right in this pose.





The end result



"This final image looks great to me, and I hope you're as pleased as I am. There's a harmony to the whole image, and with the strengthened composition and anatomy the details really pop off the page. Good work, Martin!"

Bill Corbett



What did Martin learn?



"I would never have thought of pushing this image in the direction that Bill led it in, but I'm overjoyed with the result. Thanks a lot!"

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“I have a powerful brush stroke, and that’s pretty much all of it. The feeling of a brush is important to me. I’m just built that way”

MUTINY “You just have to embrace your influences, your thoughts, your ideas and go for it.”

Close

SIMON GOINARD

LOADING...

Evoking the best of traditional while remaining true to digital, Simon continues to explore his love of art

*Y*ou need to know what the rules are before you set about breaking them. In a 10-year career as a concept artist and painter, Simon Goinard is fast becoming the poster boy for rule breakers with artwork that's as abstract as it is beautiful.

Behind the colour-swept vistas and impressions of armies on the march, hidden behind layers of paint and brushstrokes, Simon is keen to point out that you need to understand the fundamentals of art theory and technique before you can start knocking them down.

"Even if you'll paint in abstraction for the rest of your life, it's important to know how to accurately paint the body. It's the foundation of so many things. It's not only a human form, it's different types of matter – lights, reaction, feelings that you can express," states the French artist who goes under the pseudonym of Masana. "You can do abstraction in a human form, if you know precisely how to work it. The feeling you'll have for that matter is an interesting one. Not human, nor alien, nor very figurative or completely abstract."

There are few clean lines in Simon's work. Any detectable form is pushed and pulled about the scene by colour, light and texture that mixes Turner with Mullins. His skill as a figurative artist is hidden behind waves of colour and washes of applied brush strokes. Simon's art is

energetic and passionate, but like many artists he refuses to contain his work behind a descriptive style, adamant that he's yet to settle on a certain way of working. "You just can't paint every day for the rest of your life with a style and a rendering that doesn't fit with you. It won't last, you'll hate yourself or you'll hate your job in the end," says the artist. "You just have to embrace your influences, your thoughts, your ideas and go for it."

After a moment Simon reflects on his process and paintings. "If I have to describe my style," he says, "I'd say that I have a powerful brush stroke, and that's pretty much all of it. The rest I can modify at will, but the feeling of a brush is important to me. I'm just built that way."

LEARN AND DEVELOP

Simon consumes art. Like his paintings, he's a passionate lover of technique. Ever since 1997 when he first discovered Photoshop while working at video game publisher Capcom, Simon has endeavoured to explore the medium. Self-taught from studying masters of digital art such as Katsuya Terada, his aim has always been to fold digital techniques around his traditional skills, to learn from fellow artists and pursue new processes.

"Every time I work with someone, I'm amazed by the variation of process that the digital media can bring. There are

Artist PROFILE

Simon Goinard



AGE: 30

COUNTRY: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:

Turner, Jacques-Louis

David, Jericho, Tom

Scholes, Craig Mullins,

Nicolas Bouvier (Sparth)

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE:

Five hours

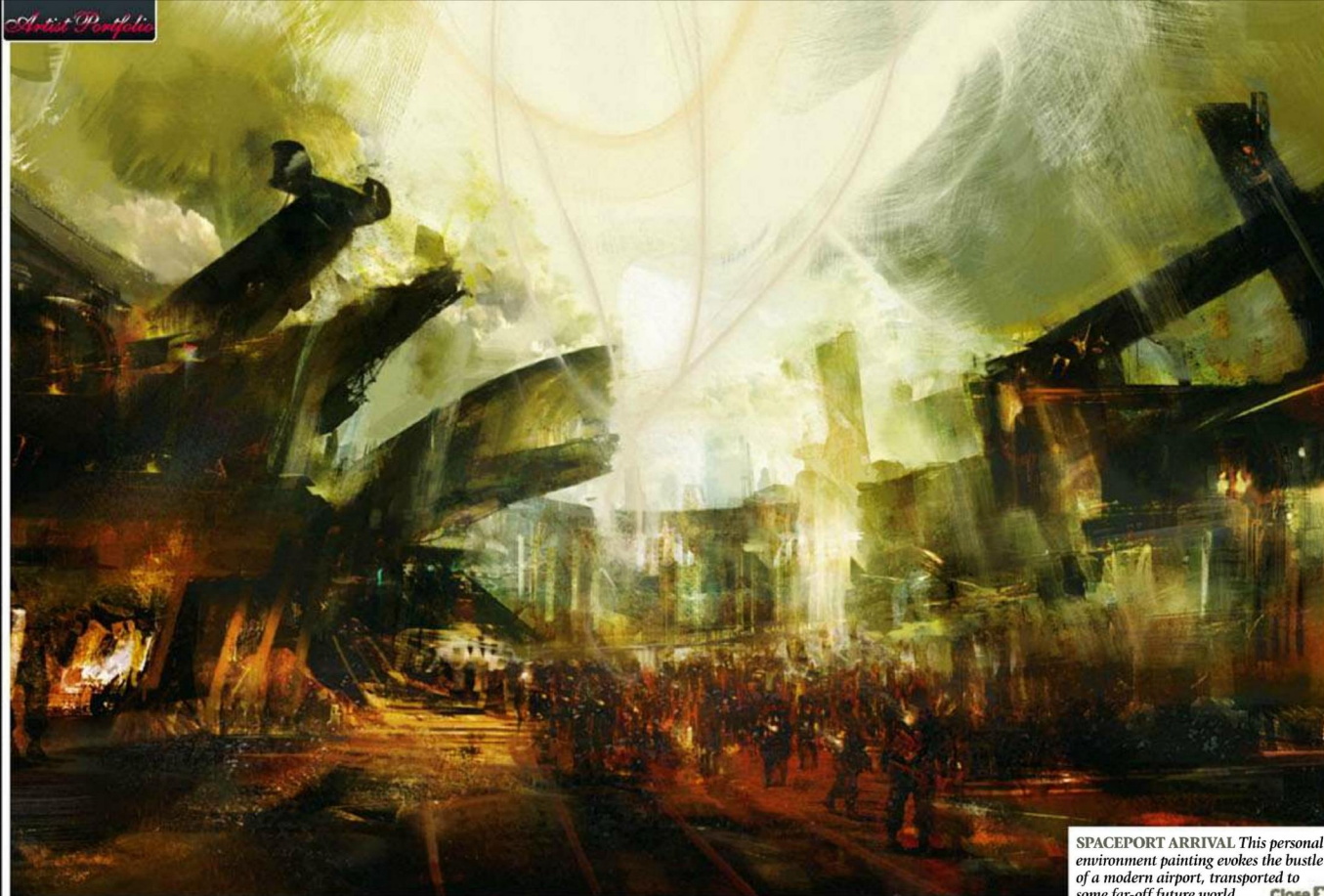
WEB: www.masana.cghub.com



ERA 1 CONCEPT Mixing his love of history and sci-fi, Simon creates some beautiful character art for his personal project, Era 1. [Close](#)

Gallery





SPACEPORT ARRIVAL This personal environment painting evokes the bustle of a modern airport, transported to some far-off future world. [Close](#)

HISTORY LIVES

The artist brings his love of history and sci-fi to life in one painting

Simon's always looking to develop his art, in terms of painting style, process and context. His personal studio project Era 1 has enabled the artist to push his influences and style.

"I love this picture because it highlighted how many layers of thoughts and 'era' you can combine in one simple image," says Simon. The painting mixes different fashions and references from history, as well as sci-fi motifs.

"It made me realise how far I still have to go too, in digital media," adds Simon. Having been self-taught, he continues to examine his work and that of others to search for new processes that can enhance his art.

Even now the artist is still shocked that people like his work: "I'm amazed by how lucky I am that so many people express so many good - and funny - opinions about my work."

Comments



Ian Dean
ImagineFX

As you draw back from the character's face you begin to explore all the texture and detail of the painting. There are hidden gems in here that are suggestive of a sci-fi landscape and a unique otherworldly place.



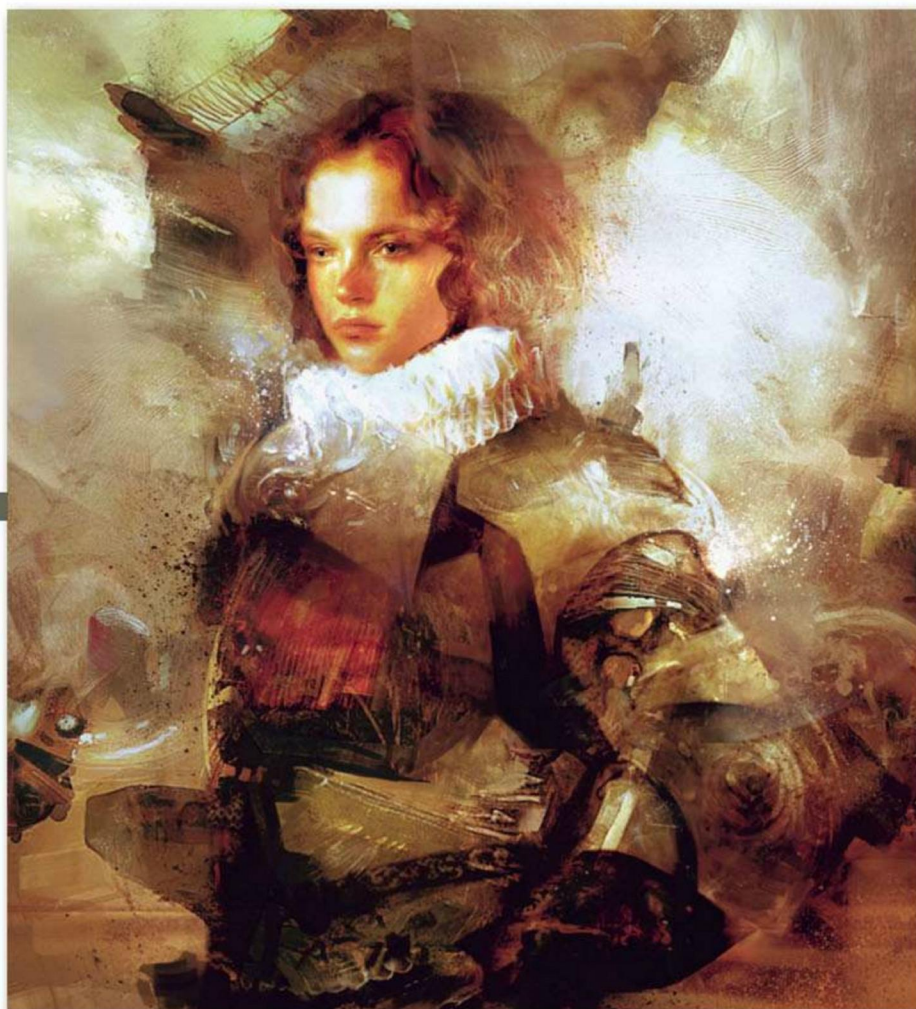
Simon Dominic
Pro artist

Simon's masterful use of contrast and detail calls immediate attention to the focus of the painting, the figure's face and expression, while the meaty textures suggest a rich, otherworldly location that's completed in the mind of the viewer as they dwell on the image.



Marcelo Mercado
ImagineFX reader

I really like how Simon uses contrast to draw your attention to the face, ensuring that you know where to begin your view of his portrait. The contrast between the chaotic, muted, saturated background and the delicate, saturated rendering of his character's face is amazing and demands to be seen.



SIMON GOINARD



MA'AT VOL.1 "The worst criticism is probably that you don't feel anything when you're looking at it." [Close](#)

CROSSING With few details, the abstract horizon and control of colour and composition, Simon manages to evoke a desolate alien world and a weary traveller. [Close](#)



♦♦ schools of painting technique now, but even with them the variation in process and style that each individual is creating is still infinite to my eyes."

LIFE ON TWO CONTINENTS

These days Simon divides his time between France and his New York home where he works on concept art, pitch developments and pre-production paintings for film and video games. While his recent projects have included the yet-to-be-released film *The Odyssey* and video game *Guild Wars 2*, Simon says his preferred projects are those that give him liberty to explore his ideas, such as a recent advertising campaign for Aston Martin. Often he has the chance to work alone on an advertisement or even a whole art campaign.

"My favourite type of job is when I'm working with talented and nice people, regardless of how we're working on the project," says Simon. "It doesn't really matter that much if you're with them for two months or two years – you'll still miss these good guys at the end of the work."

While Simon's art is complex, engaging and pushes the viewer's imagination to

claw at the painting, the artist's approach to his art and career is much simpler. "For me, if I'm just producing art to sell something, which isn't bringing anything new to the table, then it's a low. All the lows don't come from the art itself, but from the way we're forced to do it. If I'm making a piece for a game, an ad or a book that brings an idea, a concept, or a detail further away then it's a high. This is as basic as that for me."

That desire to push his art within the often strict confines of concept art, where a client's approval weighs heavier than artistic merit, is rare. Simon is able to be both commercial and expressive, with art that ranges from environment paintings to character design.

This balancing act stems from Simon's positive outlook and his need for new ideas and techniques. When asked what's in store for the future, he says: "Possibilities... I just can't imagine myself bored even in 20 years with all the things that I still have to cross in terms of form or process making. The digital media is just beginning to breathe, and we'll see many fantastic approaches created in years to come." ♦



RED MARCH Simon bought his first Wacom while a student: "After ten years I'm still very fond of my Intuos2." [Close](#)

Gallery



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Issue 81 April 2012



Take cover as Daarken's knight charges onto the cover! The fantasy theme continues with Dan Scott, who paints a range of mêlée weapons. Todd McFarlane talks about his new project, and our workshop artists cover castles, lighting and classic fantasy beasts. Plus we check out Jeff Simpson's dark art.

Issue 82 May 2012



Our comic art special looks at the history of Wonder Woman, while Alex Garner's workshop reveals how he created our compelling cover of the warrior princess. We also pass on Alvin Lee's advice for drawing dynamic characters, Lois van Baarle's line art tips, and look at Photoshop lighting techniques.

Issue 83 June 2012



Derek Stenning's retro astronaut heralds the start of stellar sci-fi issue. Inside, you'll find workshops featuring spaceships, starship troopers and aliens. James Gurney uses maquettes to enhance his dino art, and several artists explain the benefits of painting in the great wide open.

Issue 84 July 2012



Anna Dittmann paints not one, but two covers for our fairy tale-themed issue: choose between Snow White and the Evil Queen. Inside, we reveal the influence of Arthur Rackham, see what it takes to become a book illustrator, show you how to draw heads with personality, and paint with spontaneity.

Issue 85 August 2012



This manga art special bulges with fantastic art and advice, ranging from Sakimi Chan's colourful cover character to Feng Zhu painting four images at once, and Jack Bosson's priceless advice for drawing costumed figures. We also talk to comics legend Joe Madureira.

Issue 86 September 2012



We celebrate the gaudy, over-the-top world of pulp art, and embrace the genre with workshops from Will Murai and Dan D Evans. Weta's Christian Pearce dirties up his art, ex-Disney artist Jack Bosson draws jazz dancers, and Thom Tenery paints a snowy alien landscape.

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Guido

Take a peek inside the industrial-design concept artist's head. There's not a glass lobby to be seen!

Artist PROFILE

GUIDO

COUNTRY: NETHERLANDS



Having recently graduated with a masters degree in Industrial Design Engineering and moving on to an internship project at Guerrilla, Guido is now a full-time freelance illustrator and concept artist with a focus on industrial design and creature concepts.

www.guidokuip.blogspot.com

DRAGON SLAYER

"Done for a one-hour sketch-off with some people on the IRC #conceptart channel. The topic was Dragon Slayer, and I wanted to try and create a sketch directly in ink within the hour"

BABA YAGA'S HUT

"Here's the Russian witch's house on chicken legs. It was joint Character of the Week #147 and Industrial Design of the Week #92 on ConceptArt.org."



INJECTOR

"A quick example made during one of the ID sketching classes to explain a few tricks and inspire some out-of-the-box thinking."

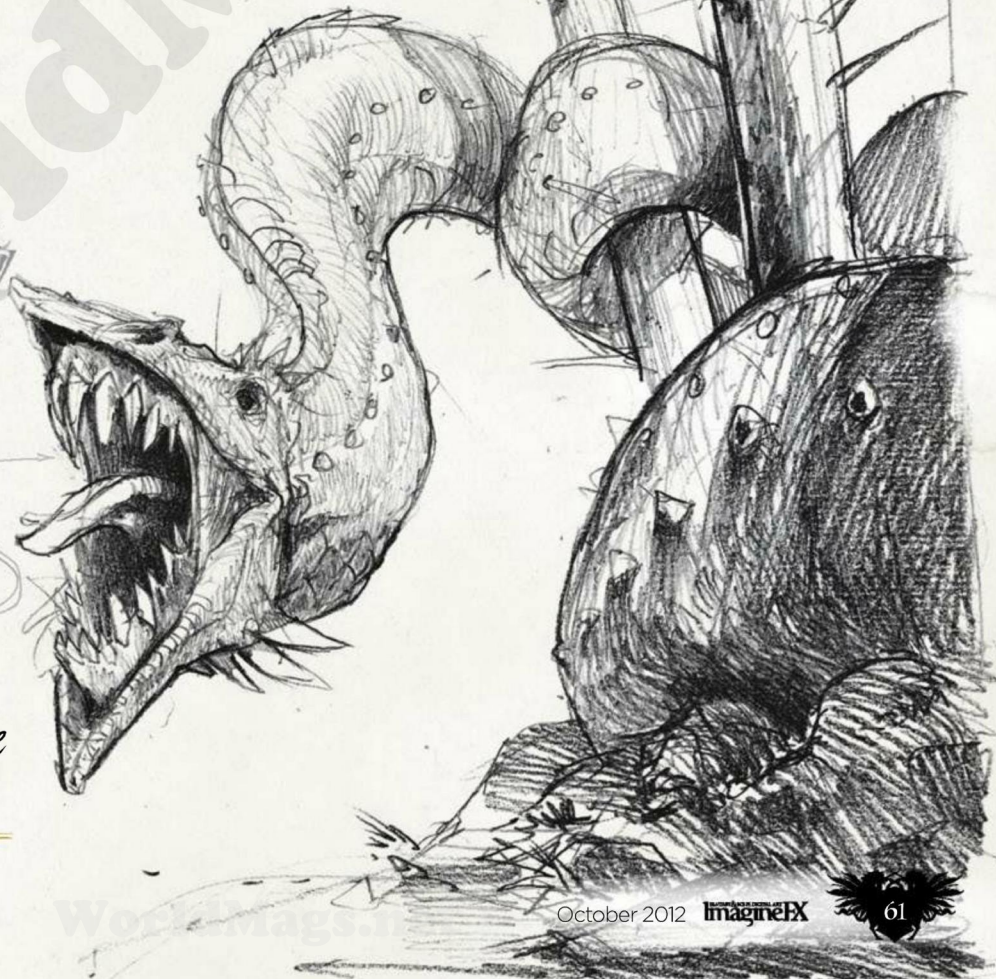
ORC

"Here's an orc sketch inspired by Paul Bonner."



WYRM

"A speedy sketch for a personal project."



"I did this to explain a few tricks and inspire some out-of-the-box thinking"

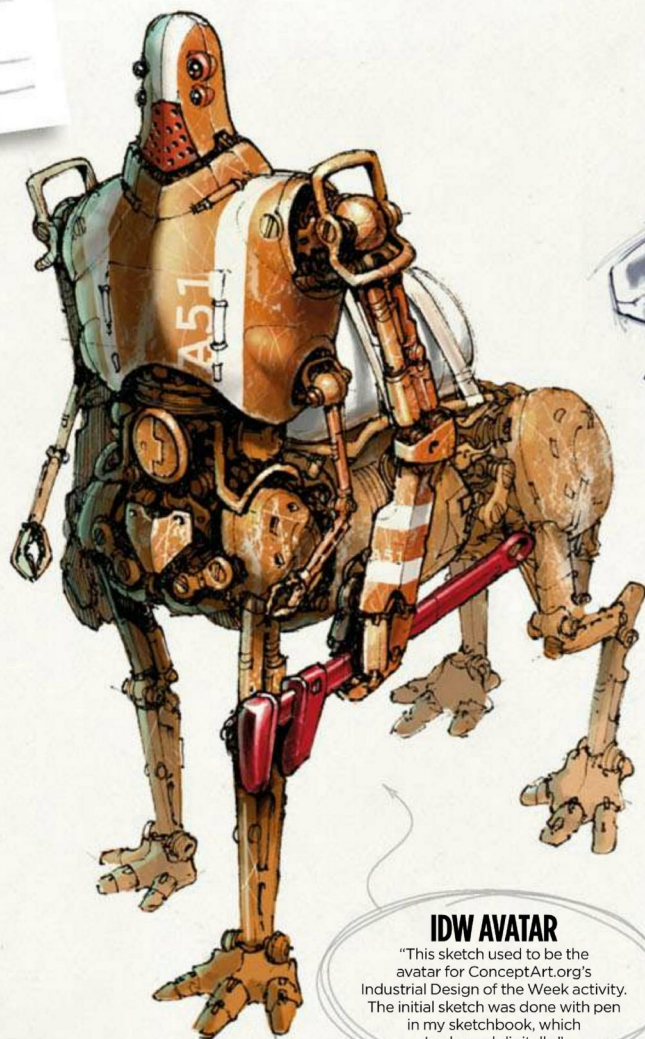


DERP DERP

"While I work mostly digitally or with pen and markers these days, I do enjoy the occasional scribble with a simple pencil."

LEAN, GREEN & MEAN

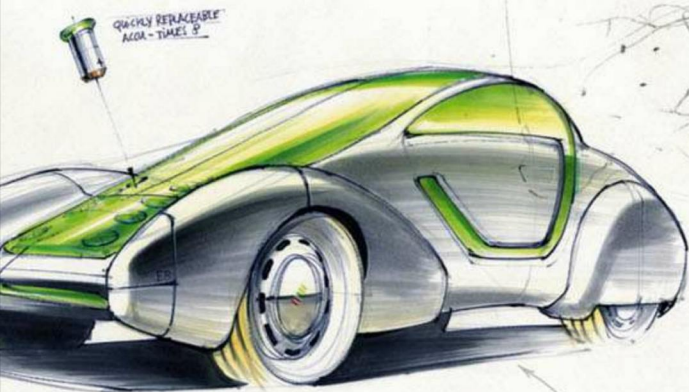
"A quick digital doodle for the Creature of the Week 153: Lean, Green & Mean topic."



IDW AVATAR

"This sketch used to be the avatar for ConceptArt.org's Industrial Design of the Week activity. The initial sketch was done with pen in my sketchbook, which I coloured digitally."

"I do enjoy the occasional scribble with a simple pencil"



ELECTRIC 8-CYLINDER

"A sketch done during the AutoRAI event at the C.m.m.n stand, a project of the Delft UT. The theme of the day was an electric muscle car based on the C.m.m.n concept."



CYCLOPS

"A random sketch of a one-eyed creature that rages against nothing in particular."



DWARF GUNNER

"A dwarf concept for a personal project that unfortunately never got beyond the sketching stage."

Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your drawings at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.

Development sheet

Artist PROFILE

Matt Tkocz

Country: US



Matt is an LA-based concept designer. He was born in Poland, raised in Germany and eventually moved to California to study entertainment design at Art Center College of Design. He's currently very busy freelancing.

www.mtkocz.cghub.com

PROJECT TITLE: BRAWLER BOT

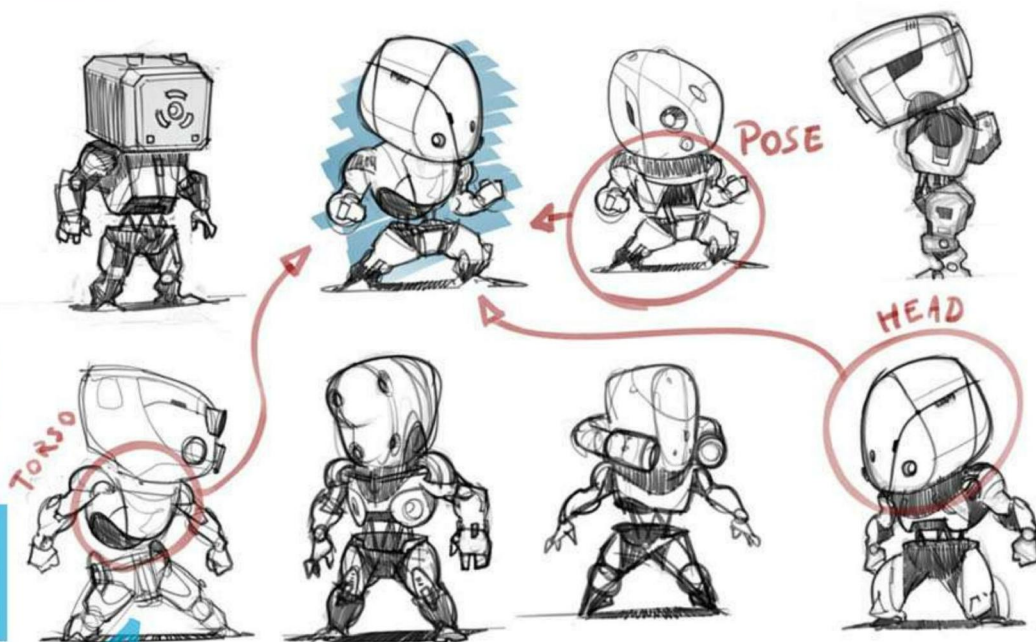
Matt Tkocz's robot concept is part of a video game pitch that features cute fighting robots bashing each other's heads in with inanimate objects. Someone needs to make this game right now!

The brief

The concept is for a small, fighting robot designed to compete in an underground wrestling league.

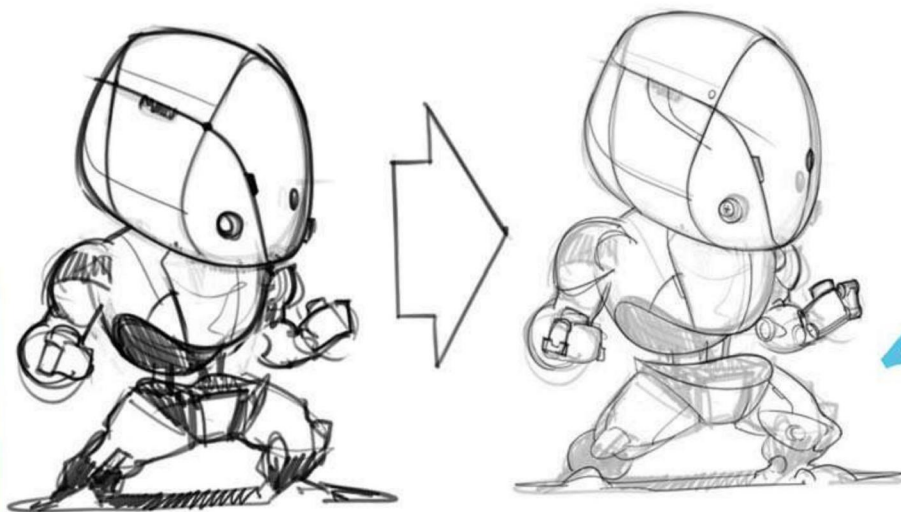
First sketches

Naturally, I start off the design process by doodling a bunch of sketches. As soon as I feel I have a couple of useful ideas down, I collage the elements I like into one sketch.



Clean up

Once I find a direction I like, I tighten up the design to a point where I feel comfortable taking it to the next stage. I don't really worry too much about things like line quality or draftsmanship at this stage, because I'm planning on painting over my line work later on anyway.



Materials

This is where I start playing around with value and colour. Even though I want to hold off on the rendering until I make a final decision about the materials, I apply a quick shading layer to help me judge the forms more easily.



Detailing and rendering

By now I've already made most of the key design decisions and the rest is mostly going to be a rendering exercise. However, I still need to do a few adjustments on volumes, detailing and so on.



**BRAWLER
BOTS**



Weathering and effects

After I'm done rendering the 'fresh off the assembly line' version, I spend some extra time on weathering the materials and applying a few effects to the illustration to make it look more badass.

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Cory Godbey

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.corygodbey.com

EMAIL: cory@corygodbey.com

MEDIA: Watercolour



Cory has illustrated picture books, book covers and other projects for clients such as HarperCollins, Random House and The Jim Henson Company. "This year I've been illustrating a Labyrinth prequel graphic novel for Archaia," says the sought-after artist.

Also coming up is Cory's work on the upcoming documentary film *The Last Flight of Petr Ginz*, and if that's not enough to keep the artist busy, his short graphic-novel stories can be found in the Eisner-nominated *Flight* anthologies. "I'm constantly seeking to tell stories with my work," he says. "I also like to draw monsters."

1 THE TROLL FATHER

16x20in, pencils, watercolour

"This piece, from my series *The Hidden People*, draws upon my love for Northern European myths, fairy tales and folklore. I like the idea of a massive father troll sitting in the forest surrounded by his many children."

2 THE WALKING HILL

16x20in, pencils, watercolour

"I think to see a hill uproot itself and walk away would be breathtaking."

3 THE GOLDEN APPLES

15x20in, pencils, watercolour

"The idea of golden apples is too hard to resist. I love the imagery."

4 THE ELF MOTHER

16x20in, pencils, watercolour

"Another piece from *The Hidden People*. The Elf Mother cares for the small creatures of the forest."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Calming and full of detail, Cory's paintings set a mood instantly. The earth seems as alive as his trolls – and the idea of a mountain uprooting itself is indeed awesome."
Beren Neale,
Features Editor



Marjolein Caljouw

LOCATION: Amsterdam

WEB: www.marjoleincaljouw.nl

EMAIL: info@marjoleincaljouw.nl

MEDIA: Pencils, colour pencils, markers, acrylics and oil paint



Marjolein's love of art came thanks to an insatiable appetite for reading at a very early age. "I read, then wrote my own stories and little poems, and eventually they came with illustrations," she says. Her art then started to take over. "I have around 30 diaries, and over the years the drawings started to outnumber the words."

For Marjolein, drawing is a way to capture the special moments in life, "and to organise my thoughts, in a visual way," she says. "I surround myself with things that I love and let them inspire me."

1 OSCAR DE LA RENTA

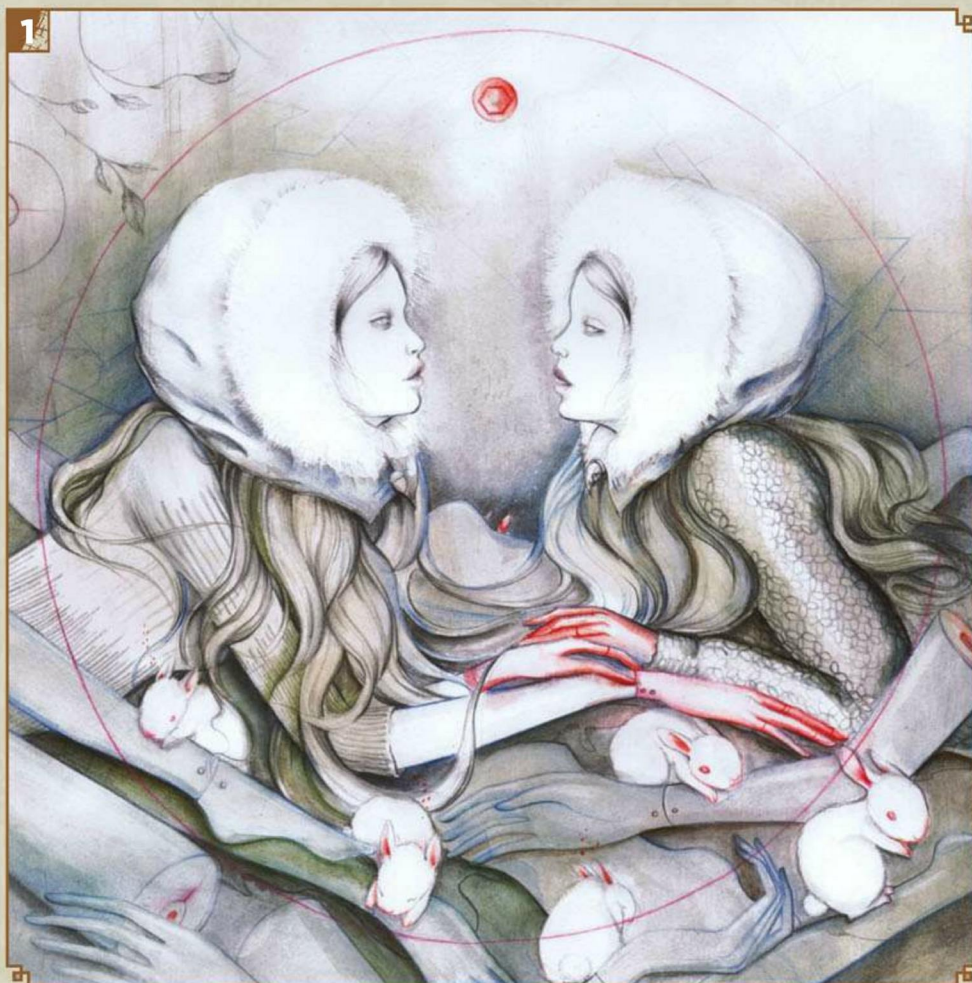
13x13in, acrylics on watercolour paper

"I wanted to create fashion illustrations for my portfolio. I saw some great outfits from Oscar de la Renta and assumed they were made of fake fur. But I did some research and realised they used real fur, and I couldn't get it out of my mind. It was disappointing and unnecessary. It's not that I wanted to make a statement, but when I was drawing, I just couldn't stop thinking about it."

2 THE BUTTERFLY'S BALL AND THE GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST

66.1x9.6in, pencils on paper

"This wall design was inspired by the poem The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast. I like to create little worlds and small stories and I love animals and little insects, so this was a nice assignment."



3 COMME DES LEROI

11.7x16.5, pencil on paper

"Comme des Leroi is a fashion and lifestyle blogger who inspired me to make an illustration. In the background you can see a wajangdoll that represents his roots. I gave him many arms because Leroi is always busy with all kinds of stuff."

4 LUDWIG ZWEI

11.7x16.5in, pencil and colour pencil on paper

"I made this logo for a beautifully styled gay lounge-bar interior in a famous gay street in Amsterdam. I also made 21m² hand-painted wallpaper. In 1900 owls were a code in the Netherlands. If somebody wanted to enter a secret gay cafe, but wasn't welcome, they just put a little sculpture of an owl in a visible place as a warning."





5 SECRET

15.7x11.8in, acrylics, oil on wood panel
"The first layers of this painting were black and white and I slowly added some colours. Changing my way of working brings new surprises. I started working on wood panels and it's a great smooth surface. I like it when my paintings are a little edgy or surrealistic. A mix of sexy but edgy at the same time."

6 DREAM

39.4x47.2in, acrylics and oil on canvas
"Sometimes a client asks for something I made a few years ago and that was the case with this painting. I think it's a challenge, because as an artist you're growing every day and it's hard to go back. Maybe you can, but you want to move forward, not back. I changed a lot of things so it was more satisfying."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Marjolein contrasts dreamy, ethereal

brushwork with graphic elements to give her work a contemporary feel. The reds in her limited palette draws the eye and works well in the moral of the Oscar de la Renta piece."

Shona Cutt,
Designer



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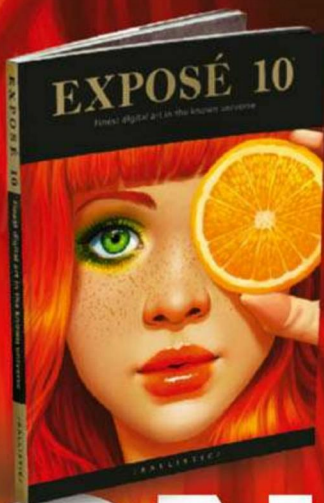
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Advice from the world's best artists



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Helen Rusovich uses natural
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Andrei Pervukhin paints a
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Photoshop

DESIGN A SURREAL FANTASY FEMALE

Helen Rusovich uses natural elements and a broad colour palette to create an enchanting and wild, surreal portrait

Artist PROFILE

Helen Rusovich

COUNTRY: Ukraine



Helen taught herself how to paint digitally when she was 18 years old

and working as a designer. Four years on and she's now a freelance illustrator and video game concept artist. Helen's aim is to become a leading artist in the games industry - she says dreams have a habit of coming true...

www.helenrusovich.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/87-tut-cover

As a freelance artist I'm regularly commissioned to paint in a variety of styles. Creating surreal artwork is something I love doing, but I'm not often given the chance to do this commercially. So I was pleasantly surprised and very motivated when ImagineFX asked me to create an image in this style.

In this workshop I want to share my passion and techniques for drawing surreal portraits. I find the process fascinating. It's also fairly straightforward if you pay attention to the forms and details that can tell the story.

For this cover image I was asked to use motifs from nature, such as peacock feathers. This gave me an extensive colour palette, as well as the idea of mixing colourful elements and lighting on a dark background to create a splash of a living rainbow. Let's see how I got on!

1 Sketches and ideas

My first thumbnails are pretty rough. I use a large Soft brush, concentrating on colour and composition, not detail. There are many ways to organise elements into a surreal pose and in this case I choose a cascade. I decide to use colour and natural motifs similar to peacock feathers. Because colour is important, I skip the line art step and create a colour sketch to fill the main space and define the final colour palette.

2 Look for key points

Movement and direction are key elements for the cascade. The main difference between standard and surreal/fantasy portraits is that the latter can comprise entire worlds and stories. How the core objects are arranged defines the movement of the image. I place key areas of the portrait around a spiral movement at about the same distance. There's no scientific sense in this - it's just a way of bringing together many elements.



Shortcuts

Clipping mask

Ctrl+Alt+G (PC)

Cmd+Alt+G (Mac)

Quickly create a clipping mask to paint cleanly into a defined shape.

3 Use colour to create forms

To create a solid mass I use alternating colours of the spectrum, and put a contrasting colour in front of them. This enables the viewer to distinguish between the layers of the cascade. I also introduce areas of transition by placing dark areas next to vivid colours. Some bright spots on dark areas will add a sense of space to the scene, hence the butterflies. Another area of contrast are the lips. I darken them to redirect some attention from the multicoloured feathers and make the portrait more balanced.







4 Make use of the colour wheel

In most of my work I use a few thematic colours that have already been selected from the start, such as blue and green gradations to create something icy, or a yellow/red palette for scenes of fire. However, in this portrait I have to use all the colours of the rainbow, which necessitates the use of a colour wheel. I set a control point and select the image's main colours by rotating the wheel. Some simple schemes include the triangle, where three leading colours are located the same distance apart on the circle; the wing, which features one main colour and two additional, plus a complementary colour on opposite sides of the wheel; and the split, in which two main colours sit on opposite sides of the wheel, with one of the colours split into two.

WATCH THIS!

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5 Using references

Some references could come in very handy. I'm looking for photos that show the materials I need to replicate on the canvas: feathers, leather and insect wings, for example. I'd advise finding as many as possible, before changing their colour palette accordingly and eliminating those that don't suit. There's no need to copy everything from a reference shot – instead, try to find some key details that represent the object you want to draw.

6 Looking out for blind spots

When I work with a rich colour range I check the image for blind spots, areas where it's hard to make out forms in black and white. It's very important, especially if an image will be printed. To check this I create a new layer with solid black colouring with a Color blending mode. You can also convert all colours to Grayscale (this is not the same as using Hue/Saturation to adjust colours).



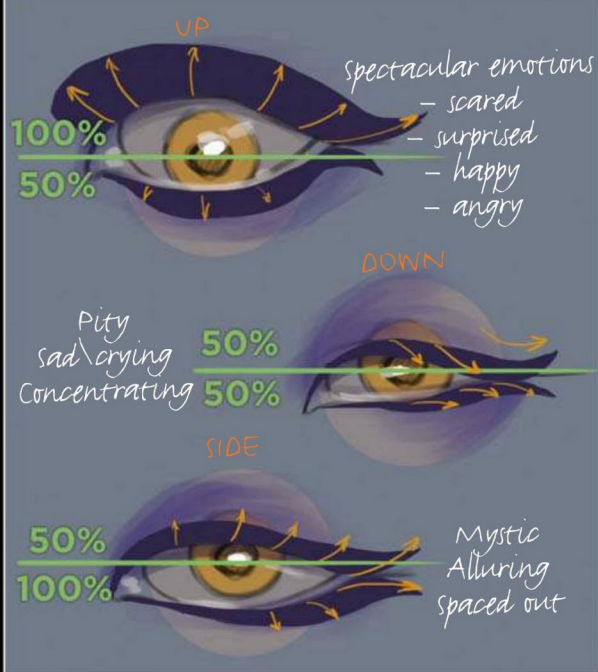
PRO SECRETS

Build up your own style

There are many lessons from artists in books, magazines and online explaining how to draw almost everything, but don't try to copy them wholesale. Try to soak up the basic idea of a tutorial and then modify it so it works for you. To further develop your art skills, come up with alternative ways of creating similar objects as discussed by an artist.

7 It's all in the eyes

I really like drawing eyes. For this portrait I use bright make-up to support the overall theme. After creating the main base I usually move onto shading and apply accents. I apply eyeshadow to make the eyes more vibrant, and after adding reflections I paint the eyelashes. I ensure that there's the same reflection on the eyelid and lashes. To finish this bright make-up I use a Spray brush to add some coloured sparks and pores.



8 Capturing the look

I always pay close attention to the eyes because they're a key means of displaying a character's emotion in an image. Depending on how open or closed the eyes are and the overall shape they take, the eyes help dictate what the character is feeling. If you don't account for this then your characters will have a 'dead fish eye' look about them!



9 Laying down the lips

I always start drawing lips with a dark colour. After laying down the base shade, I use a transparent brush with hard edges and paint a few light strokes from the bottom up, which gives the lips some texture. I create some edges and corners by adding dark and light accents opposite each other, which also clarifies the overall shape of the lips. One colour isn't enough for a portrait like this, so I add some additional colours to make the lips look more interesting. I use a sharp Round brush to add some reflections on the lips – this isn't something that's always necessary, but this time it supports the overall theme as well.



10 Skin texture

I use a soft Round brush to create realistic, soft-looking skin. When I'm satisfied with the skin tone I use a Spray brush to create skin texture. It's no secret that moles, wrinkles and other fine details make a portrait look more realistic, so this time I use freckles. I think freckles are the best choice here because I can mix them with a pattern and place them according to the overall order of the cascade. I use a Spray brush all over the face, with particular emphasis on the nose and cheeks. As a final touch I use the same Spray brush with very small diameter to create some pores within the most pointed angles of the face.



WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ixf-color2



11 Feather details

Most of the feathers were established during the initial sketch. They define the pattern of objects within the portrait. I start working on details from the centre to the edges – this enables me to create a certain stacking order of objects in space: skin>feathers>effects>objects in the air. I make a final base for the feathers by using some quick brushstrokes. Then I refine the final form and fix all additional colours, before separating the feathers from each other and adding a shadow. I apply some small stitches on every colour to create some texture, as well as some tough strokes to create the form of the feathers. I already have shadows under each feather so all the stitches still look separate. All that's left are the fine details – more layers with small brushstrokes to cover some rough places and create more texture.



12 Light the water drops

When looking at the image I notice many sparkling and shining details. It looks a little like oil so I decide to fix this by making the skin look wet. First of all I make some light contours for the drops while defining their size and position. I apply transparent shading for every drop by adding some light colour to places where drops are in contact with the skin, and some dark colour to show some reflection of the scene. As a final touch I put some reflection on the darkest spots and edges. I also add some white spray to create the smallest water drops.



13 Adding light effects

Special effects are an integral part of surrealist paintings. The main background's pretty dark so I decide to add some bright sparks to it. First I apply a soft base by randomly placing some brushstrokes. To add the desired direction and some action I choose Filters>Blur>Motion blur. To highlight the spark I create a new Color Dodge layer and paint a glowing tail of sparks using a Soft Round brush.



14 Using focus

Focus is a good means of directing the viewer's eye to all the right places in your image. I separate my image into several layers with objects and add different amounts of Blur to each layer. Playing with layers like this is fun and enables the viewer to see different focal points within the image.

PRO SECRETS

Don't overdo those details

Rendering detail is often fascinating, but try not to get carried away. You can identify some key areas within your image and make them perfect, but in turn this can create problems. First, overly rendered areas may not match the rest of your artwork. Second, perfect details aren't always the best choice – they can spoil the overall image. Third, learn to use all the canvas space while drawing and sacrifice some details for the sake of a good idea.



Identify key visual elements

I use the Rule of Thirds while creating the image. It's a simple way to create an attractive piece of art. The canvas is divided into a 3x3 grid. Key element in your image should be placed within areas of the lines. The points of intersection of the lines are the focal points, where it's necessary to direct the viewer's eye.



Paint metal objects

I try to paint the metal with contrasting highlights using references. I start by creating a base, then paint deep shadow areas, before adding highlights using the Color Dodge tool. It's important to follow the reflections while drawing metal objects. Try to take account of the elements in the scene that affect them.



Apply light and shadows

I draw body-shaped spots of light in Color Dodge mode using a Hard brush with Pen Pressure turned off. Then I apply a little Motion Blur to these light spots, and uncheck Transparency Shapes Layer. I add a global light - the rays filtering through the foliage - and also blur them. Finally, I alter the direction, colour and dispersion of the light.





Photoshop COMPOSE AN ACTION SCENE

Conan clashes with a giant serpent in a dynamic fantasy encounter painted by **Aleksandr Nikonov**

This piece was created for an online art challenge. I think that regular participation in such contests is a great way to improve your skills and train yourself to work quickly and more efficiently. You also receive a lot of feedback and advice from your fellow contestants.

The title of this challenge was simply Conan. I wanted to represent him as a brute, looking like Hulk from the comics, but with a more realistic render. The composition needed to be dynamic, to convey the speed and danger of the fight between Conan and the huge snake.

I tracked down a lot of photos of jungles, reptiles, weapons, fur clothing and muscular athletes to use as reference, together with some photos of Hulk miniatures. My aim was to achieve the quality of a screenshot taken from a movie.

Capture the action

I often use Motion Blur to enhance the effect of movement, and to make the picture look like a frame from a movie. I draw on layers sequentially adding blur with Ctrl+F, which applies the last used filter. The same method can be used to add depth of sharpness, blurring objects in the foreground or the background. I watch a lot of movie trailers and games to learn new techniques. I paint the trees this way: I add leaves with a good texture brush, then blur, add more leaves, and so on.

How I create... A RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE



1 Establish the composition

Usually I start with a few rough, quick sketches, just to get my ideas down. I develop the composition at this stage, working out how to direct the viewer's eye to the key focal point: Conan. I create the line art and adjust the tone, which will guide me during the colouring process. The areas of most contrast and brightness are my points of interest.



2 Add colour to the scene

I use different blending modes, such as Hard Light, Overlay and Multiply, to make a colour base, but still don't add the light. I use the standard Round brush for the most part, and work on the characters and background simultaneously. When I'm sure that the silhouettes of my characters won't change much, I separate them from the background using masks. This is a powerful tool that simplifies the painting process.



3 Direct the viewer's eye

I paint details to indicate the material of objects. I draw a small snake at Conan's feet, which I use for directing the viewer's eye to the focus of the scene. From time to time I check the tonal relationships by converting the picture to Greyscale. The biggest area of contrast should be at the point of attention. I finish off with some post-processing and colour correction.

Artist PROFILE

Aleksandr Nikonov
COUNTRY: Russia



For the past four years Aleksandr has been an environment

artist and character artist in the video games industry, working on projects such as the popular MMORPG Allods Online and Sky Forge. He also accepts freelance assignments when time permits.
www.bit.ly/ifx-nikonov

**DIRECT LINK FOR
WORKSHOP FILES**
www.bit.ly/87-tut-anno

Photoshop CREATE A FAERIE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Use expressive textures, graphic shapes and an abstract approach to paint a faerie figure in bold colours. **Emmanuel Malin** reveals how

While considering concepts of faeries and dark fantasy, an image came to mind of a creature with an insect-like face. I saw this as a way to put a twist on the basic imagery of faeries and butterflies, enabling me to create something different and more personal – darker, even. Darker in a colourful way, because bold colours can be as frightening as the overused black. Furthermore, I have a phobia of insects,

and I'm pretty sure that I'm far from being the only one.

I wanted this image to be very graphic: something like a Rorschach ink stain, yet colourful. This would suit the organic and mysterious shapes of butterfly wings and similar insect references that I spent some time studying. Before I start any painting I'll always spend time searching for related references, before putting them away and then working from memory. This is a good way to

stimulate the imagination and create something original.

In this workshop I'll show how to work using textures and the Clone Stamp tool. This provides me with an alternative to customised brushes, and is enhanced by the use of layers and masks, which you can readily paint with. To me, Photoshop is like a laboratory for pixel alchemy. This illustration enabled me to convey my passion for experimentation, which is an important part of my work.

1 The final sketch

I always try to start doodling as late as possible. I prefer thinking, reading and getting inspired by any means, rather than trapping myself with premature, rough sketches. I like sketching precise and advanced ideas. I start working in colour pretty early on, which is a good way to gain confidence as an artist. I have a first pass at the overall image, and then start exploring the face.



2 Focus on the face

The final composition is going to be vertical, but because the main focus will be on the face of the creature I begin working free of any format constraint. A close-up it is, then. I start to build it from dark to light with the Clone Stamp tool and some texture that I paste roughly into the scene. I'm on the lookout for happy accidents – shapes and colours – that occur in this game of improvisation.



Artist PROFILE
Emmanuel Malin
COUNTRY: France

Emmanuel lives and works in Paris. He began his career as a medical and scientific illustrator. Today he focuses on art direction in video games and web design, always eager for new challenges.
www.bit.ly/ifx-malin

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/87-tut-faerie



3 Final composition

Once happy with how the face is taking shape, I move on to building the final composition. It's time to merge all layers, and to extend the canvas size to the right proportions. Still working from dark to light, I start sculpting the neck and shoulders. By copying and pasting from the face I'm able to build an abstract insectoid/organic area to suggest the creature's body, which will support the overall idea of the picture while keeping the face as the main area of interest.



PRO SECRETS

Edit your workspace

Don't forget that you can customise Photoshop's background, which is originally set up to a grey value. If you're working on a dark picture then choose a dark background; your eyes will lose lots of details and subtleties in the blacks if they have to deal with a contrast that's too strong. Try to adapt the background to the final context that your image will be showcased in, if possible.

Shortcuts

Clever layer selection

Ctrl+click (PC)

Cmd+click (Mac)

Grab a specific layer or group by clicking it in the picture.



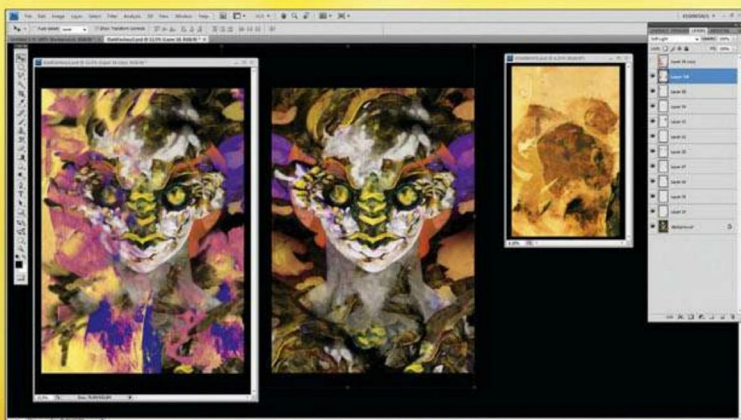
4 My beloved Clone Stamp

I mainly paint with the Clone Stamp. It's a subtle tool that adds a lot of personal character to an image. You don't paint with a colour, but directly with the textures you brought to the image. Ctrl+click to choose your duplication start point, either on the canvas or another opened image. You can choose to work from the layer you're on, or to mix several layers. I'm still amazed by the possibilities!



5 Bringing in colours

Now I need to add some colours before getting too involved in the picture. The sooner you start playing with tints and saturation, the better. I'm looking for round shapes, so I use the Elliptical Marquee tool to experiment with very rough movements throughout the image. I paint in the selection with the Gradient tool that ranges from colour to transparency, and then sculpt with the Eraser. My aim is to produce some pleasing interactions between colour and texture.



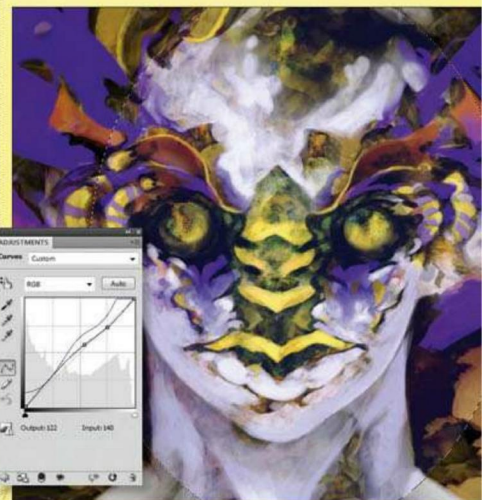
6 Customising textures

Rather than customising brushes I prefer spending time on customising textures, creating them for each project. They're a good basis for creativity and there are plenty of ways to use them: paint directly from them with the Clone Stamp, make collages, or insert them into your picture and experiment with layer modes. Here, I paste a saturated texture (left) in Soft Color mode to saturate the picture (centre).



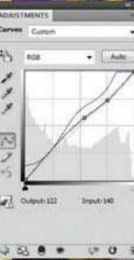
7 Getting more graphic

I continue with the colour work, and apply purple/blue to create an interesting contrast to the sepia mood. I use a sharp, calligraphic brush to make it pop out from the picture. A strong colour is also easier to colour-select (Select>Color Range) when you want to work with it separately by pasting textures into it.



8 Working colours with the Curves tool

I insert a Curves Adjustment layer. With this new layer, I can subtly work the contrasts, but also the amount of tints separately in the darks and whites. I like to use it to kill the black in my illustration, and here I colour the dark areas with blue. If you create the layer after making a selection, a mask is automatically created. You can then sculpt it with a brush or the Eraser tool.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: CALLI



I like brushes that can be versatile. Instead of special effect brushes, I prefer more simple ones such as the Calli Brush that I use throughout my workshop. It has a sharp edge, but is smooth and pressure sensitive to Opacity.

9 Let the image breathe

I think that the blue graphic elements deserve more attention. I merge the layers and save a new copy of the image. It's good practice to save several layered files during the painting process in case you make a mistake or experience a software crash. I start working on a more spaced-out composition, getting back to the Clone Stamp tool.



10 Taking in the 10,000 feet view

I try to be organised and put some distance between myself and the work-in-progress. It's a good habit to get into, because each time you take a 30-minute break you're in a better position to judge if something has gone wrong – or not, hopefully! Here, I think I've lost something from the initial sketch, given the current cold look of the creature's eyes. I'm glad I made an advanced sketch in hi-res, so I go back to it and copy-paste the eyes, enabling me to start them afresh.



11 Abstract body

I now put more attention to the bottom area. To enhance the idea of the Rorschach ink stain, I work up an abstract composition as a body for the creature. I clone some parts of his face and use them as a start to bring in a range of textures that are similar to butterfly wings. I'm looking for a good balance of symmetry, and apply yellow lines to make it look more natural.



12 Attention to detail

I decide to paint some honey-like mixture coming out of the eyes and mouth. This is the kind of detailing that helps give the subject some life and negates any unnatural symmetry in the piece. To paint this semi-liquid element, I start with a few bold yellow shapes and then Ctrl+click the Layer Icon to select the shapes. Using a couple of Multiply and Screen layers for shadow and light, I give some depth to the yellow element.



Shortcuts
Paste in selection
Ctrl+Shift+Alt+V (PC)
Cmd+Shift+Alt+V (Mac)
Make a selection, then copy anything in the layer with a mask over the selection.

13 Neo-pointillism

Because there's no background, just a strong honey-coloured backlight, I use some particles to inject some saturated grain and density that adds life to the illustration. I have a bank of particles files, and here I use a simple layer of mixed blurred or semi-blurred small brush strokes. By repeatedly copying and pasting these graphical elements in an Overlay mode that's 100 per cent saturated and in different colours, I soon produce some eye-catching pointillism effects.



14 Finishing up

To finish the illustration, I go back to the Brush tool and finish working the details. I constantly zoom in and out of the picture to ensure that I don't lose the overall view of it. It can be the worst part of the process, because it's hard to decide when the picture is finished. I just add some extra saturated light blue and purple/pinks, and there we are – the creature is here, all vivid and dark of mind.

PRO SECRETS

Take care with textures

Painting with textures has its dark side: they can be abused! Ideally, you need to maintain a tight balance through strong graphical shapes. The more meaning they have, the better. Round shapes, edgy shapes, every abstract-ish element you add can either enhance the direction you want to take in your picture, or contradict it. In this workshop I chose to paint some wing extensions to the eyes, using tense lines defining the shapes out of frame.

ArtStudio

PAINT A REALISTIC SCI-FI SCENE ON THE iPad

Robh Ruppel shows how clear, simple design forms the foundation of an imagined environment

Artist PROFILE

Robh Ruppel
COUNTRY: US



Robh designs for feature film, theme parks, animation and

video games. He's been nominated for an Annie Award and was awarded Best Art Direction for Uncharted 2 and 3. Robh's also received a gold and silver award from the Spectrum Fantasy Art annual.

www.robhruppel.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/87-tut-ipad

I'm going to paint a snapshot of a sci-fi scene on my iPad using the BoxWave stylus and ArtStudio app. There's no right or wrong way to make art. It's taken me a little time experimenting to find a process that works best for me, and that's important to emphasise.

Everybody's brain works differently and more importantly, it's mileage over technique that will ultimately enable you to create better art. My drawing teacher used to say, "Try everything and the stuff that sticks, is you." Spoken with the wisdom of someone who had made art

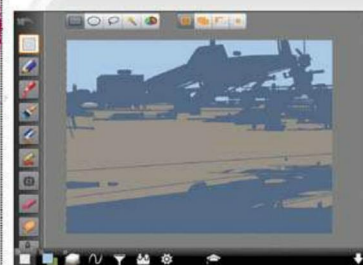
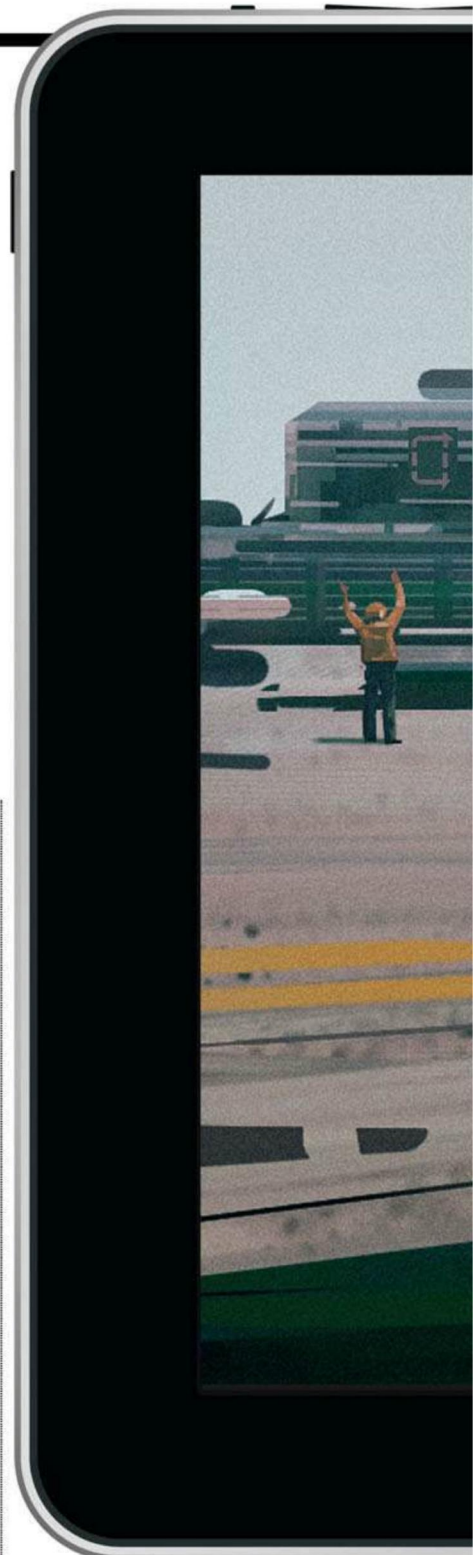
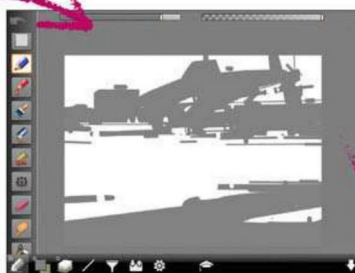
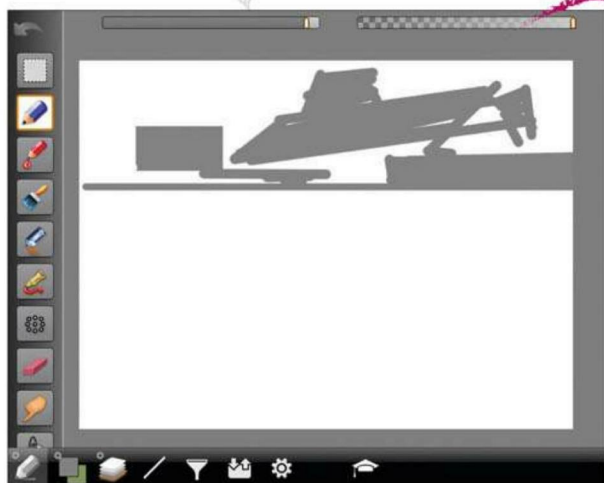
for a long time! Try out the method I'll explain here and if it sticks, then great!

My process is pretty similar, whether I'm painting from life or from my imagination. I start with a clear, simple design in two to three values and concentrate on making that as interesting as possible, all the while looking for a variety of shapes, marks and calligraphy.

The more I make art, the more I realise that if it has any greatness it's in this initial design. Whether it's Carravaggio, Caleb Deschanel or Frazetta, a clear simple design is essential. All the detail in the world will never save a bad design.

1 Clear vision

I begin by establishing my solid, clear design. I spend time going back and forth with a simple Round brush to produce the design I'm after. I erase, add, combine and edit; in ArtStudio (www.iphoneclan.com) – the app I'm using here – you can change any brush into an eraser, which speeds up this process.





2 Achieving realism through colour

I keep the darks on a separate layer, which enables me to use all my initial work as a stencil, by locking the transparent pixels. Now I can colour the scene and retain all the design elements and drawing that I've been working on. The sky and deck colour are on one layer and the ship is on another. I spend time

getting the relationships of these first colour notes right. I learnt long ago that not just any colour carries the impression of reality. It takes a while to get the right combination of a few colours to achieve that life-like look. When I paint from life this is the first relationship I strive for before moving on. It's those colour notes relating well that carry the impression of realism in a painting.

3 Using layers in ArtStudio

I duplicate the ship layer, darken it and erase the light areas that show through from below. It's a workaround because linking layers and layer numbers are limited. I've tried most painting apps, but stick with ArtStudio because it has a good comparative Color Picker, a Straight Line tool and a simple interface. ➡



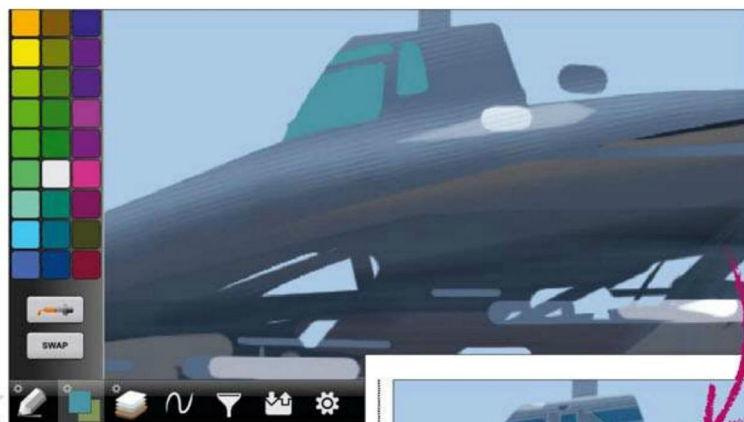
4 Tone and colour

Now I vary the colour of the shadow layer. This is pretty intuitive and comes from years of painting from life. It's that modulation of colour that makes something feel alive and vibrant. It's crucial to nail the right general tone and colour first, before modulating within it to achieve the vibration of reality.



5 Adding detail

I add a little texture using a Scatter brush and some highlights. Now I have all the major colour/tone notes in place. The design is set and I can start adding details. I want the whole image to work before I start noodling. Everyone is different. Some folks can start with a corner and work left to right. There's no right or wrong way. At this point I have everything on three layers. As I start adding details I keep flattening the layers because the maximum is six in ArtStudio.



6 Painting windows

I block out the large windows of the cockpit on their own layer, Lock Transparency and then paint details into this layer. This is pretty much the procedure for how I approach the rest of the image. By having a solid base (design, colour and value) the details at this point are in the right relation to the whole, so they won't be out of place.



PRO SECRETS

Limit your layers

Hundreds of layers are fun, but having to constantly plan ahead exercises the mind and forces you to visualise what you're after before you make that mark. Painters of the past had to have a clear goal in mind, and as digital tools take over I think we're losing the ability to form a complete design in our minds before setting out to draw or build it. That's not to say we abandon happy accidents or serendipity, though.

7 Painting the mechanical objects

I use the Marquee tool to make a selection to paint into. This enables me to keep clean edges in a particular area while painting loosely within it. This is particularly useful for mechanical objects. I've found that the contrast of clean borders and a looser interior gives a painting that pleasing 'spontaneous yet controlled' feeling.



BoxWave

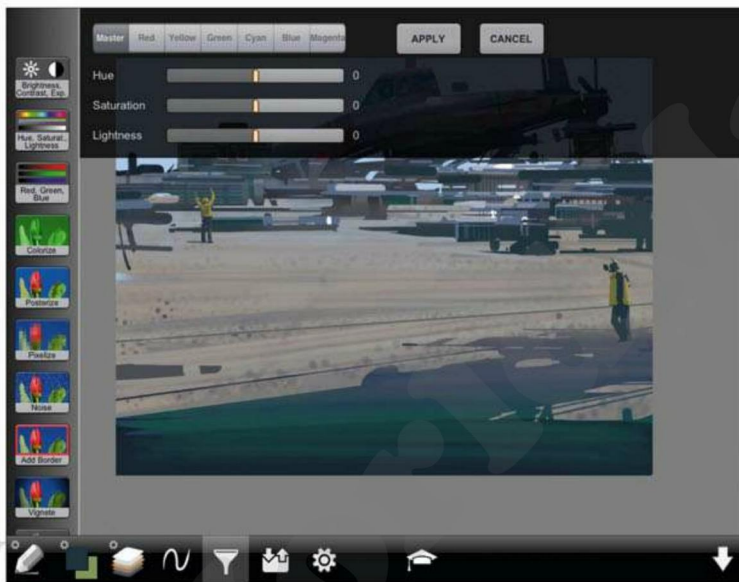
The BoxWave was one of the first silicone-tipped capacitance styluses that I came across. I had tried a few others, but this one slides nicely and has a good weight.

8 Form a backstory

The ship needs some markings so I paint and erase a design onto a new layer. As I paint I form a backstory in my mind for this image. It's a clandestine photo of an experimental Soviet sub/aircraft circa 1970. There's something about a casual snapshot, if done well, that has a certain charm.

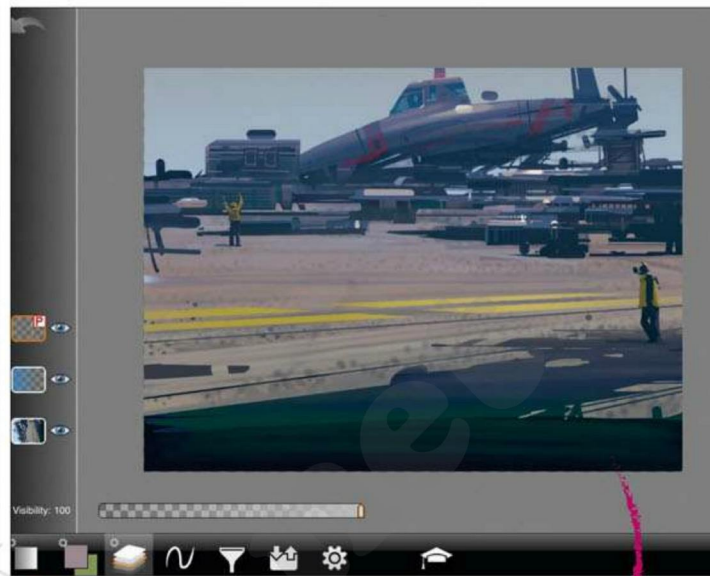
9 Painting figures

I paint the characters large on a separate layer, then scale and reposition them where I want. I paint the shape first, then Lock Pixels, paint in the light and shadow areas and finally add the detail.



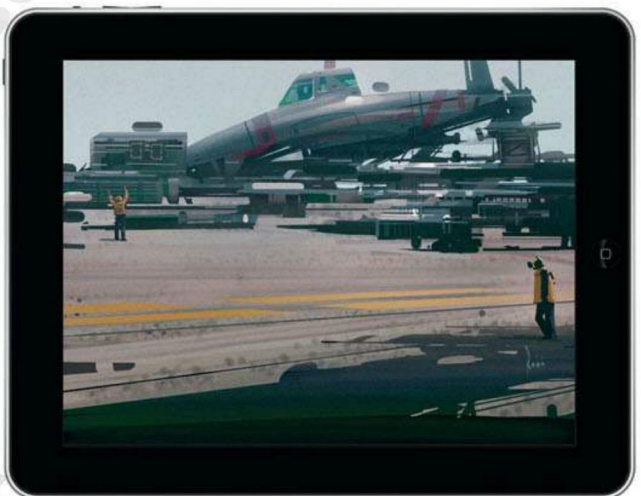
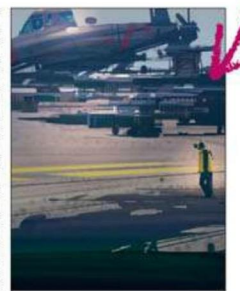
10 Add depth to the scene

The image is 90 per cent there. Now I start 'processing' it a little by upping the contrast and shifting the colours. ArtStudio has some good tools to use, so I can achieve the look I'm after. I want to knock down some of the contrast on the darks in the distance, so I use the Gradation tool and drag a gradient across the top of the image. I set the blend mode to Difference and this adds a little haze and depth to the image.



11 Refine the detail

The scene needs another colour/design note, so I add paint strips on the deck. These are drawn and erased using the Straight Line tool. For extra realism I use the Circle Gradient, set the layer to Overlay and drag out a few hot spots into the image. I then lower the layer opacity. I block out the painting very flatly, and slowly add areas of depth to the image. By starting flat, the design will never be lost.



12 Final touches

I'm still looking for a little more of an old colour photo look to give it that snapshot feel, so I duplicate the Levels and colour adjust one to green and sepia tint the other. Then I subtly blend them in with opacity settings and different blend modes. It basically harmonises the colours, ups the contrast and gives the painting that little touch of realism. This is really just a simple sketch, but it has a solid design, good indicative realism and enough realistic light to look right to me. I leave the image alone for a day and then look at it with fresh eyes, just to be sure.

PRO SECRETS

Scale to fit

A technique I use on the iPad is to paint something larger on its own layer, then use the Transform tools to scale and reposition it. This is particularly good for mechanical detail, and a great workaround for the tablet because sometimes you want a small dense area of detail and the resolution isn't there.



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Paint Tool SAI

START USING A NEW ART PROGRAM



Paint Tool SAI is a simple yet versatile bit of kit, as **Paco Rico Torres** discovers as he highlights the essentials of this painting software

Paint Tool SAI is a relatively light program. It doesn't have too many options, but you can achieve a lot with what it does offer. You can download a 30-day trial from www.systemax.jp/en/sai, and it costs around £43 for a full working version of the program.

If you're used to working with Photoshop and then open Paint Tool SAI

for the first time, it might even look a bit confusing. In fact, using SAI is easy and this page is a basic guide that will enable you to start working with the software.

SAI isn't a photo-manipulation program. It's designed specifically for painting and drawing, so many options available in programs such as Photoshop aren't in SAI. That makes the program less versatile, but more efficient.

Artist PROFILE

Paco Rico Torres
COUNTRY: Spain



Paco is a freelance illustrator who's worked on art for several card games, magazines and books.
www.bit.ly/ifax-paco

MANAGE PAINT EFFECTS IN SAI

A. Maintain opacity

Preserves opacity of the paint. If this is on a layer, then whatever you paint on that layer will have the same opacity of the surface over which you're painting.

B. Apply clipping

If the Clipping group is on a layer, whatever you paint on that layer will have the same opacity of the layer below.

C. Activate Selection

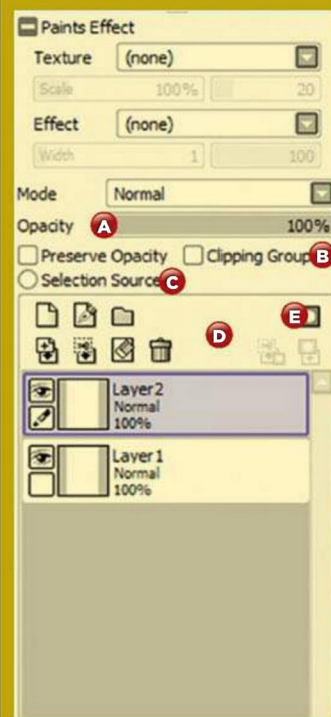
If a layer has the Selection Source on, the Color Bucket and the Magic Wand will work according to whatever is on that layer, no matter in which layer you're using them.

D. Layer options

Here you can create a new layer, delete it, clear it, merge it down, transfer it down or group it with other layers.

E. Create a mask

Use this to create a layer mask.



1 The Color panel

This comprises six elements, which you can show or hide by clicking the small icons on top of the panel. With these six elements you can select colours to paint with using the colour wheel, change their RGB or HSV (which stands for hue, saturation, luminosity) levels, mix two colours to produce a middle point, save your favourite colours, or mix them like traditional paint before applying them to the canvas.



2 The Layer panel

From this panel you can add texture to a layer, apply a watercolour-like fringe to the edges of all the brushstrokes in the layer (which is an effect), change the colour mode of the layer, alter the opacity of the layer, create or delete layers, and introduce Layer Masks – although note that this last one only works with the Pencil tool. All and all it's pretty intuitive, especially if you've used layers in other painting programs.



3 The Quick bar

The Quick bar, which is located just below the menu bar, has some useful shortcuts, such as Undo and Redo (1), Deselect, Inverse Selection, and Hide Selection which hides the dot line around a selected area (2). From here you can also Zoom (3), Rotate the canvas (4) and flip the canvas horizontally to check for composition errors (5). Finally, the Stabilizer (6) is great if you have shaky hands like me. Check it out!



Photoshop

DEPICT A STRONG HEROIC POSE

Channel your inner Arnie and get those artistic muscles pumping!

Phroilan Gardner paints the classic barbarian hero archetype

Artist PROFILE

Phroilan Gardner
COUNTRY: US



During eight years at Blizzard, Phroilan picked up

character modelling and illustration. He now lives and works in Boston, MA as a 2D art mercenary. www.bit.ly/ifx-gardner

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/87-tut-thor



1 Thumbnail

I generate a few thumbnails to loosen up and explore possibilities. I have a good idea of the heroic pose I want to achieve. Much like the classic Doc Savage covers, I want my barbarian to be in your face and physically imposing. Upshots are good for creating the impression that your figure towers above everyone else. It's also fun because painting faces in unusual angles is more of a challenge.

G

rowing up an Air Force Brat, I moved around a lot. When you're new to places, you end up having a lot of free time.

Much of it was spent with my face buried in a book or comic book following the adventures of larger-than-life heroes and heroines in fantastic, faraway lands.

I was particularly drawn to Robert E. Howard's Conan The Barbarian. Conan was a pretty powerful fellow, and I loved how artists depicted his strength. When drawing barbarians, anatomy is key.

Without good knowledge of human musculature, you won't be able to effectively depict the savage strength these characters possess.

I use a lot of visual reference to aid me in my art. I try to imbue my figures with a base of realism. Be it anatomy or textures, it's always good to have a reference library handy to draw from. Creating poses from your imagination can lead to problems with accuracy. This workshop will reveal the steps of how I go about my rendition of a barbarian – mistakes and all.



2 Set your light source

A strong lighting design is essential for creating the right mood in your scene. It's good to always have an idea of where your light is coming from, so that you can maximise dramatic potential. I prefer to not use pop-ups when I can and love to colour pick from my scene. In the early stages I drop a pure white and pure black down to quickly grab from, for value blending.



3 Refine your pose

I often jump right into painting my figure without having the pose all worked out. Often I get to a point where that bites me in the butt and I have to restructure the pose. It's an organic back and forth where I might like something in one pose, and something in another, then I copy/paste/transform my way to something I like. This is usually how I sketch, and it often yields plenty of possibilities.

In depth Paint a strong heroic pose



PHROI
2012



4 Adding character

Time to quickly throw in some ideas for my hero's outfit. I recently painted a bunch of axe-wielding barbarians, so I opt for a warhammer for a change. I slap a sword on his back for good measure and drop in a background from a previous painting to quickly establish an environment, hiding the dreaded blank page behind him.



5 Refine the pose

I'm still massaging the pose, trying to find something that I like. The anatomy is getting all mushy now, but I know that once I find a good pose, the anatomical details will get 'hammered' out. Hah. It's good to also pay attention to silhouette and negative space. Thick and thin is a good rule of thumb when designing a character to create movement/interest across all his or her forms.



6 Introduce colour

I drop in some areas of colour to start working with. I go with blonde hair. Naturally, blue is the complementary colour of yellow and conveniently enough is often found in the sky.



Shortcuts

Select all

Shift+Ctrl+C (PC)

Shift+Cmd+C (Mac)

Use this to copy everything within a selection. Follow with Ctrl+V to paste a flattened layer.

7 Jump-starting a dead end

So here is where the lack of early exploration bites. I once again redraw my pose, although this time I'm a bit more warmed up. I drop in a face I had painted before to explore options. He doesn't quite look heroic, but I forge ahead to see where it goes.

8 Creative shortcuts

A trick I picked up long ago in Photoshop is to drop in elements from previous works. I do this all the time. Many times while working on a painting, a neat idea pops up stemming from something in that painting. I'll then start a new painting branching off from that neat idea. So far, a backdrop, a face and a shield are in place from earlier works that I've done. It saves me a bit of time and also quickly puts detail on the page that my eye can latch onto to form new ideas. In this case I see it as a way to revive a stale pose.



9 Step out of the comfort zone

I ditch the face because I had just painted a similar figure. I go back to the upshot. He was just looking a bit too sinister. I need more upshot practice anyway.





10 Using reference photos

Time to start rendering anatomy. This is when photo reference comes in handy. I have a great book of bodybuilding by the most famous muscle guy around: Arnold Schwarzenegger. Muscles are clearly defined and you get a good sense of how things work and fit together. The guys in that book can be a bit over the top though, so it's good to have less-bulky references around, such as boxers, sprinters, me. Okay, not me.



11 Rendering

Once I've established my pose and costume details, I focus on rendering and form – my favourite part of the painting process. With flesh tones it's good to have a subtle variety of warms and cools to push things forward and back, and to also get a nice interplay of temperature.

12 Your hero's environment

Where is your guy? Is he on a battlefield, or a foggy nebula? The background can be as abstract or as literal as you want it, but it always has to support your character and strike a good balance compositionally. My guy is smack dab in the centre, but that will change soon.



13 Colour correcting

Curves and Color Balance are great tools to wrangle stray areas of colour. In this case, my background and figure were two different colour schemes, so I Color Balance my way back to sanity. My Color Balance go-to is to add cyan and blue to the shadows, red and yellow to the highlights, and a touch of green to the midtones. Try it for yourself.



PRO SECRETS

Flipping

I constantly flip my image. This is an indispensable trick to find wonkiness in your drawings. What looks right in one orientation can be horribly jacked in another. Try to find a happy medium and you will most likely find inner peace.

14 Composition blues

Standing smack in the centre of the image isn't very a compelling composition. By shrinking my barbarian and offsetting him a bit, I create room to generate some interest in the background. His face is just off a sweet spot using the Rule of Thirds, I'll address that later.

15 Refresh your eyes

I flip my image to check to see if things aren't horribly skewed. It's a feeling-out process sometimes using flipping to check your anatomy or compositional balance. I try out some warpaint so that he doesn't look too generic.





16 More rendering

Now I'm just plugging away. Little adjustments here and there and rendering everywhere. I add some Celtic designs to some of his gear. His hammer and hair remind me of Thor. I realise that this is kind of a hodgepodge of cultural references, but a quick stop in Wikipedia finds me a Celtic thunder god named Taranis and that's all the justification I need. I'm painting a thunder god in mortal guise. Taranis is also closely associated with the image of the wheel, so I incorporate wheel-like elements into his belt and loincloth.

17 Background elements

Time to start figuring out the details of your background. I've found that a mountain is a good way to frame a barbaric thunder god. It's also nifty that barbarians are often near mountains. They are rarely found far from a mountain or a bottle of Nair. This is a fact.



PRO SECRETS

Keep an eye on those values

Always keep your values in check. I like to do this by dropping a colour layer on top and then filled with either pure white or black. I have found this to be the most accurate way to check your values as opposed to simply desaturating your image. Values are essential for creating the illusion of depth.

18 Framing elements

Mountains, snow flurries, a bigger, better banner and a subtle vignette all help to flesh out the world my barbaric thunder god dwells within. I create my vignette by using the Lasso tool on the area I want to highlight, then I invert my selection and fill it with a dark value of a colour I deem appropriate. I then use Gaussian Blur to the fill so that there's a generous falloff, and play with Opacity as needed. I bring back the warpaint for school spirit, and we're almost there...



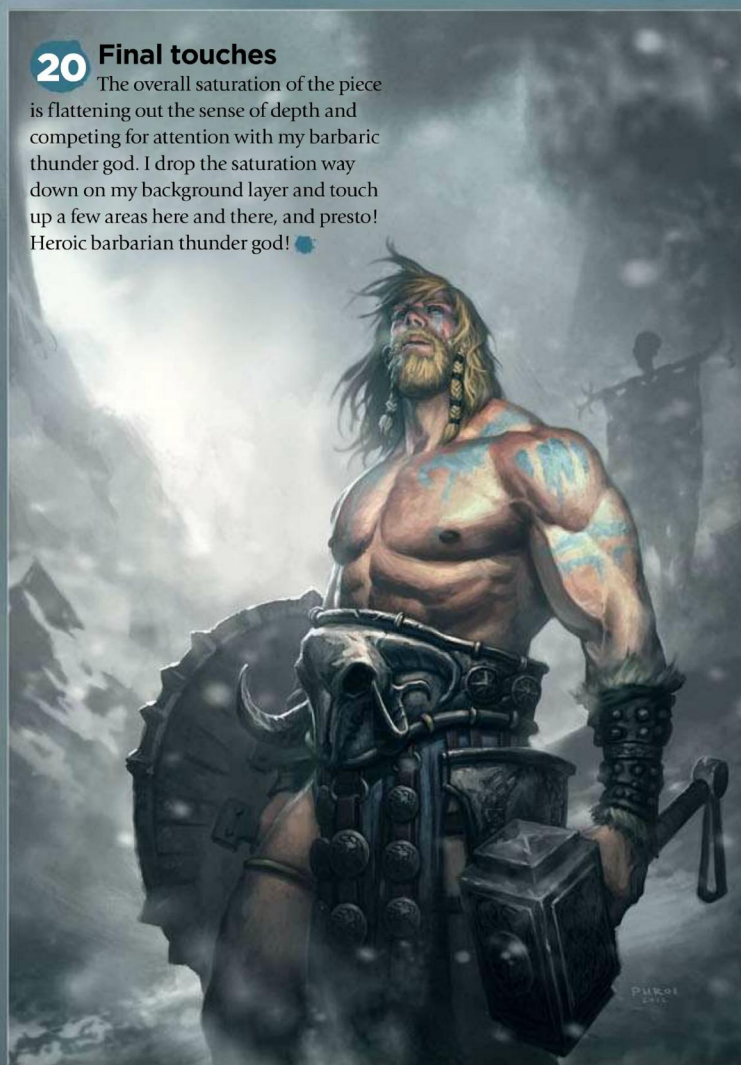
19 Values and fine-tuning

I love to paint faces, and this guy's face is really bugging me. I push things into place and continue to play with the balance of light and values. It helps that I've kept all my main elements separate for these adjustments. When I first started digital painting, I would try to paint like a traditional artist and work on one layer. I've found this to be a great learning technique, but not very conducive to the commercial art pipeline.



20 Final touches

The overall saturation of the piece is flattening out the sense of depth and competing for attention with my barbaric thunder god. I drop the saturation way down on my background layer and touch up a few areas here and there, and presto! Heroic barbarian thunder god!



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barbarians, with Laurel D Austin
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ISSUE 88 ON SALE 14 SEPTEMBER 2012

Artist insight

LIVEN UP YOUR VISUAL ELEMENTS

Drazenka Kimpel shares her tips on painting the materials and accessories that will enhance your illustrative storytelling

Artist PROFILE

Drazenka Kimpel
COUNTRY: US



Drazenka is a freelance illustrator. Her style is often influenced by

Victorian and pre-Raphaelite painters, and she's provided artwork for gaming, comic and publishing companies.

www.creativeidust.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/87-tut-fabric

Details in a painting are crucial in capturing the viewer's attention. All objects you paint have substance, and you need to convincingly describe what those objects are made of, so that they can help to convey the tone of the scene.

In this workshop I'll help you visually represent different fabric materials, metals, and organic and man-made accessories. I'll also demonstrate the use of patterns and how they interact with the shape and environment.

By applying texture, colour and shading to objects in your art, you'll be able to differentiate between materials. For example, what a fabric's folds can tell you about its density and weight. Lighter fabrics such as gauze and chiffon will create soft, tubular folds, while heavy, dense fabric such as denim or canvas will create more sharply defined folds.

While colour alone won't say much about a fabric, it can reveal information about a particular metal. Unlike fabric, metal doesn't create folds; it's usually flat or slightly curved – such as a suit of armour. The addition of metal to an accessory can enhance its sense of realism.

Before including any such materials into your painting, have them there for a reason. Those items will more than likely tell the viewer about the time period, region, character stature, and so on.

“By applying texture, colour and shading to objects in your art, you'll be able to differentiate between materials”

1 SATIN

This material is easily recognisable by its glossy surface and dull back. It's a heavy fabric and drapes very well. Paint soft, curvy folds with the highlights at the top of each fold. Due to its lustre, satin will absorb some colour from its surroundings, so use variation of shades while painting. Make the most of smooth blending techniques – the fabric has to appear smooth. For best results, use low opacity airbrushes.

2 VELVET

The smoothness and shininess that velvet is well known for is caused by the tiny fibres that stick out of the fabric. I find that using a speckled brush during the finishing stages enables me to mimic this fibrous texture. The best way to recreate velvet on the canvas is to paint the shiny parts on the outside of the fold, rather than the top of the fold as you would for silk or satin.

3 FEATHERS

There are many shapes, sizes and colours of feathers, depending on the bird that they came from. Feathers used for writing are large and thick stemmed, with a well-defined shape. Begin by painting the general shape first followed by the stem (it's thicker at the base, becoming slimmer towards the tip). At the end, define the inner and the outer barbs in uniformed fashion. Ostrich and peacock feathers are mostly used as fashion accessories because of their softness and elegance. Use an airbrush to paint the base, and small Hard round brushes to paint the long curved strands. ➡➡

PRO SECRETS

Create custom brush sets

Practise creating your own set of brushes to speed up the painting process. Not only will it help you get the job done more efficiently, but you'll be able to develop your own style of art. Keep your brush sets organised by style or theme for easier searching and application. The more brushes you create, the better you'll get at it. Don't forget to evaluate your brush library and keep it up to date.

4 FUR

Even though fur can be organic or synthetic, it still resembles human hair. To paint fur, you can use a speckled brush and paint one area at the time, following with a small, Hard Round brush for individual strokes. You can also use custom fur brushes to speed up the process. Here, I've used a custom fur brush followed by a Hard Round brush for fine strokes at the top. Make sure to alternate your colour shades in the process, depending on the type of fur that you're trying to mimic.

“ Alternate your colour shades in the process, depending on the type of fur that you're trying to mimic ”

PRO SECRETS

Get texturing

One of the best ways to make your art stand out is through the use of textures. Adding photographic textures along with the hand-painted ones will enhance your image, because your work will appear more realistic and stylish. However, exercise control and don't texturise everything in the image. Use artistic common sense to make decisions as to what to texturise and what should be left alone.

5 PLAID

This woven cloth has a tartan pattern, consisting of criss-crossed horizontal and vertical thick lines in a myriad of colours. The fabric appears somewhat fuzzy due to the texture of the wool fibres. For the best result, work on one section at a time rather than all of it at once. Paint this material using soft brushes with light strokes; pattern lines should always follow the lines of the folds.

step 1 - create fabric pattern
create wireframe



step 2 - apply fabric to a wireframe
one frame at the time
(be aware of the perspective)



step 3 - Liquify tool to create folds
apply shadows and highlights
for dimension



6 CHIFFON

This fabric is woven into a very fine mesh, which appears smooth to the eye. Its lightweight and sheer structure makes this fabric resemble foam. To paint this material, use brushes set to between 30 and 40 per cent Opacity and utilise a lot of layers. Retain more transparency in the centre and less on the edges. When overlapped, the transparency of the fabric will give the impression of depth. If you're unsure of how the fabric will overlap to create folds, check out some reference photos while you paint.

7 DENIM

When you paint denim, you have to remember that this material is made out of woven yarn, which creates diagonal groove lines across the fabric. It's dull in appearance and usually quite thick. For greater realism use variations of colour and tone during the painting process to mimic faded areas. This is a great opportunity to use custom texture brushes to paint the grooves, and small brushes to paint the wear and tear.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifx-denim

8 LATEX

Depending on its use, this material can either be highly reflective or have a matte finish. It's stretchy and closely conforms to the shape of its wearer. When stretched over a surface, it creates a great numbers of folds, which are somewhat flat and small. Use a Pen tool for the reflective parts, in combination with gradient filling. To make the material appear to stretch over the surface, use either the Liquify filter or the Smudge tool, but do so sparingly.



Shortcuts
Brush editor

F5 (PC & Mac)

Access the brush editor to tweak the structure and rotation of the brush that's in use.

9 WOOL-KNITTED TEXTILES

Wool is a warm fibre made from sheep. By observing the yarn, it appears as if it was made of hair, which technically is the sheep's fur. When the wool yarn is knitted, it looks like row upon row of little braids. It's a good idea to create custom brushes for painting this type of textile. Paint wool on several separate layers – one for the base, and the top one to apply the custom braid brush. You may also use photographic textures if the surface isn't a close up.

10 ARMOUR

Painting signs of general wear and tear on a full suit of armour, such as dents, scratches, rust and dirt, is a good way to tell a visual story about the character who's wearing it. A full suit of armour comes in many layered, segmented plates to accommodate a knight's movement, especially in the arm, leg and hand areas. I'd advise painting the plates as separate layers, overlapping the parts where needed. Engravings and patterns using different coloured metals are an extra touch that will ensure your character stands out from the crowd.



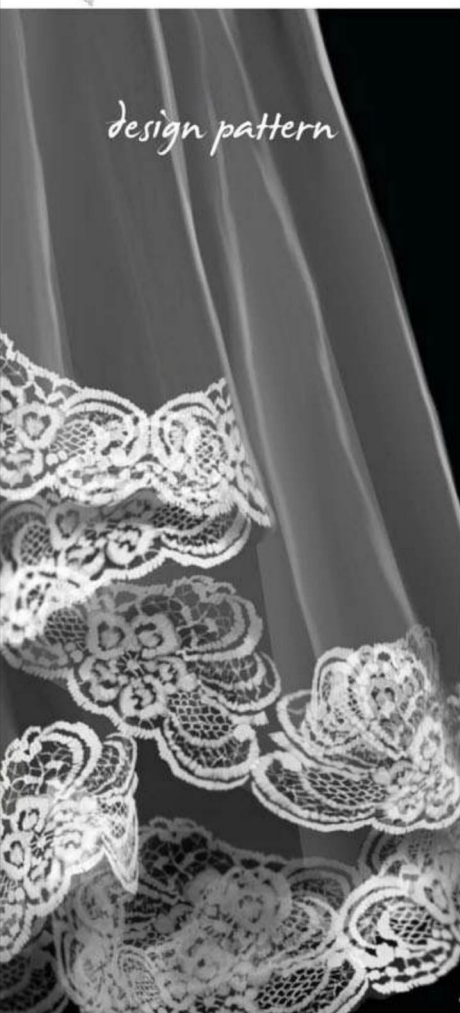
WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ifx-armor

11 LACE

A small, Round Hard brush is sufficient to do the job of drawing lace. If you use reference photos when painting lace you can easily follow the pattern and make it look realistic. Should you decide to include large areas for lace, draw a pattern, and copy and paste it repeatedly. Connect the design pattern with tiny lines resembling treads. In a similar manner to chiffon, use many layers to overlap the pattern, but don't change your layer settings in the process. Keep everything uniform.

“Use reference photos so that you can follow the pattern and make it look realistic”



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DENIM BRUSH



This brush is great for enhancing the denim texture once the base colour surface is painted, or in combination while you paint. Try not to overlap the strokes.

WOOL KNITTED BRUSH



Use it to paint the relief pattern on a knitted sweater by applying repetitive, directional strokes along the length of the textile. Paint one stroke at a time for a realistic result.

WOOL TEXTURE BRUSH



To add texture, apply this brush randomly over the entire surface of the garment after you've painted the knitted pattern. A Soft Light layer helps enhance the wooly texture.

FUR BRUSH



With the current settings, this brush is great for quickly painting fur. Use colour combinations accordingly. It can be applied as a fluid stroke or a single stamp.

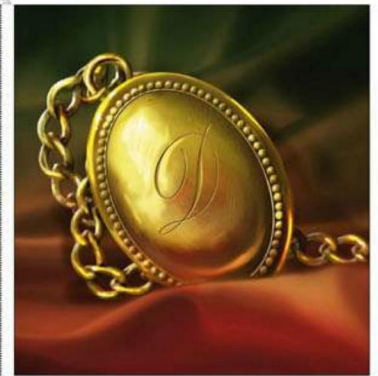
FEATHER BOA BRUSH



This is a fun brush to paint a bunch of feathers randomly. I've used it here to paint a feather boa around the girl's shoulders. Use this brush with different colour settings for some interesting results.

12 GOLD

Pure gold, by its very definition, is bright yellow and very shiny. However, painting gold using just one shade of yellow isn't going to do the job. Because the metal is shiny, its surface will bounce-reflect the colours in the immediate environment. To paint realistic gold you need to use yellows and whites for the highlights, mustard greens and oranges for base colours, and browns for shadows.



13 SILVER

This is a highly reflective metal and appears grey in its original state. When placed in an environment this metal will absorb the surrounding colours. Painting silver can be a challenge. The best way to start is by using darker shades of grey for the base colour, lighter greys and whites for highlights, and dark grey and black for shadows. Having said that, don't forget to pick up the shades from neighbouring objects.



WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ifx-gem



14 GEMSTONES

When cut and polished, gems display brilliant lustre and shine. Start by creating the structure of the cut. First draw the outline skeleton of the wireframe, using one layer for the top and another layer for the bottom. This is important because the translucency of the stone reveals the shapes beneath. The wireframes should resemble a number of triangular shapes. Paint each shape separately, using gradient filling. If the stone is a ruby for example, don't just stick to reds – utilise shades of orange, violet and pink. The same goes for other types of gemstones.

15 EYELET DESIGN

This is a type of lace made by a plethora of holes edged out by stitching. Cotton is the most common fabric for eyelet designs. Note that this pattern features a relief, because it's raised from the surface by the stitching treads. For that reason you have to paint the shading around each hole accordingly. The weight and the way the fabric folds will greatly depend on the number of holes in the design.

PRO SECRETS

Establish a custom palette

Get into a habit of creating a custom colour palette and set it in the corner of your canvas. This will enable you to maintain colour consistency, and speed up your work process. Make sure your colour palette is on its own layer and locked, so you don't erase it by mistake or include it in your painting. Create as many subject-specific palettes as you need - skin, clothing, sky and so on.

Shortcuts

Color balance

Ctrl + B (PC)

Cmd+B (Mac)

The sliders enable you to quickly adjust the colour balance on a range of layers.

16 BROCADE

This decorative fabric is known for its embossed design pattern and sheen. Brocade is woven, so fibre lines will be visible. Paint this fabric using a couple of layers: one for the solid textured surface and another for the patterned design. Make the decorative design look as if it's embossed by painting highlights and subtle shadows. To add refinement, create the design by using different colours.



Balance your textures

With such a distinct, lizard-like skin texture, I want another strong texture in there to balance out the central space. It makes sense to accentuate the wooden structure. You can see how I went about deciding what brushes to use in the Brushes boxout (below).



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: MAIN BRUSH



SKY/CLOUD



SKY 2



DRAGON SKIN



DUST



WOOD



I used around five basic Photoshop brushes for the bulk of the image, with more for the detail and textures. There were two brushes for the sky, clouds and small particles of the painting. I then created a brush for the dragon's skin - it's fast and effective. There was also a photo used to help with all the wood texture.



Remember the Golden Rule

All through this stage and the colour stages, the most important thing I do is draw the basic proportions of the Golden Rule. The red lines show them in this picture. I multiply the canvas size by 0.62, to make the first line, and by 0.38 for the second line - that's how you find the centre of a composition. Next, I reduce, scale and move objects according to the proportions of the Golden Rule. If we assume the side of the canvas is equal to 1, then the other proportions would be 0.62, 0.38, 0.24, 0.14 and 0.10. As you can see here, the light blue lines illustrate proportions for the horizon size and blue lines do that for the vertical one.

Complicating things

At this stage, with the main elements settled on, I try to figure out what I can do to make my composition more complex. I adjust the size of the canvas and the sizes of the main subjects. The connection lines help me find relationships between the objects and make my composition more holistic, always keeping in mind that curve with a point.





Colours and light

I need to put a lot of thought into choosing the image's colours and the direction of the light. Because the event is in the mountains, I pick cool colours, such as green and violet. To introduce warm colours, which emphasise the centre of the composition, I use the light of the faint sunrise. The red arrows show the direction of the light.

Photoshop CREATE A DRAGON IN MID-FLIGHT

Andrei Pervukhin works with custom brushes, reference material and some art theory

Artist PROFILE

Andrei Pervukhin
COUNTRY: Russia



Andrei became interested in digital art five years ago, fresh out of art college. He built his CV working on various games titles, as a freelancer. Still rooted in the games industry, Andrei is also working on various comic book ideas and is on the lookout for any project that pushes him forward as an artist.
www.bit.ly/ixf-pervukhin

First off comes the idea, the back-story the image will hang from. Racking my brains one day, lots of images appear in my mind and I begin to unleash them onto canvas. The primary idea was to mix a steampunk concept with classical fantasy. But that wasn't enough – I needed a particular setting, and a city in a highland area presented itself. Then the story started to gather pace. Recent colonials live there, polluting their surroundings and depleting the natural resources without a care for tomorrow. Of course, the local inhabitants don't like that, so they wage a war on the colonists. That's the moment I capture here: the locals, with a little help from their massive harnessed creature, are attacking the colonials. 🐉

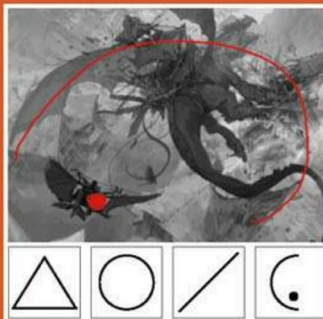
How I create...

THE STRUCTURE OF THE IMAGE



1 Get sketching

Usually I sketch in black and white, and here I play freely and quickly with rhythms and shapes. It leads to the composition I use – the geometric shapes the subjects are going to follow. I find a curve line with a point, a triangle, a square, a diagonal – some simple compositional structures to keep in mind.



2 Stay composed

The triangle suggests movement – pointing upward, the composition becomes more stable. The circle means kindness and natural shapes, the diagonal shows rapid movement and the curve is similar to the diagonal. I choose the curve with a point of focus within, for my composition...



3 Give them a star

I started this image with the intention of staying away from references by pushing myself to use a range of different brushes. On the other hand, I can't know everything, so I gather a bunch of references that could help make that central dragon creature pop off the page – to make it more realistic.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award!

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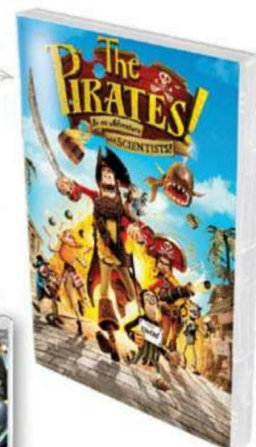
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RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Is it a PC? Is it a tablet?
Is it a netbook? But,
most importantly, is it
any good?

Slate 700T PC ONLY

BLANK SLATE It looks like an iPad and performs like a PC. But is Samsung's tablet any good for digital artists?

Price £863 **Company** Samsung **Web** www.samsung.com **Contact** Via website

At first glance, Samsung's Slate 700T looks like an ever-so-slightly-cheap iPad. Its 11.6-inch screen is slightly bigger than the iPad's 9.7-inches, but the adornments are almost identical. Next to the screen you'll find a front-facing camera and single button, and if you flip it over you'll see a rear camera and a unibody construction.

Turn it on, though, and the similarities end. Whereas the iPad is a giant version of the iPhone, Samsung's Slate is essentially a touchscreen PC. It's a miracle of modern miniaturisation, packing all the components into a 12.9mm thick body. Where it gets really clever is with a small foldable dock that supports the

unit at an angle, and a Bluetooth keyboard so you're not forever mistyping things on the touch screen.

A Wacom Digitizer stylus is also supplied with the unit, and it just about turns it into a full-blown graphics tablet, complete with a screen. Anyone who's used a Wacom pen will find it familiar: a button on the side controls right-clicks, and the (awkwardly placed) button at the top switches it to eraser or selection mode.

The hybrid screen mixes 10-point capacitive touch with the stylus. Although it's a little thinner and lighter than the Wacom pens we're used to, it's a good starting point. We tried it out with a pair of apps – Adobe's Photoshop Elements and Autodesk's Maya – and it proved to be versatile



The setup combines PC, laptop and tablet functions in one package, with a responsive keyboard and charging unit that offers extended functionality.



A Wacom Digitizer stylus with interchangeable nibs brings some much-needed touch sensitivity to the tablet market.



Well-spaced keys offer good feedback when typing. Ideal for when working at home or on a hard surface, but not so handy for on the go typing while travelling.



The brushed metal rear panel offers a good, grippable surface.



enough for both. The size of the screen is going to limit your creations, but it's still slightly bigger than the iPad's.

The Slate ran both applications well, which is one of the benefits of having a fairly beefy Intel Core i5 processor. It flicked between multiple layers in Photoshop with ease, and the bright,

While Windows 7 means that full-blown programs can be run on the device, it's just not designed for a touchscreen interface. Compare it to Apple's sleek iOS or even Google's Android and it feels clunky. Yes, the Slate does have the best iteration of Windows 7 touchscreen we've seen,

The charging unit extends the core functionality of the tablet, with a HDMI port, a second USB 2.0 port, a headphone jack and a Gigabit Ethernet port.

“ Samsung's Slate is a miracle of modern miniaturisation, packing everything into a 12.9mm thick body ”

high-contrast screen displayed colours vibrantly and realistically. Filling up Maya with 3D objects caused a few slight screen distortions on our review model, but despite this it rendered everything without falling over.

We managed to get just over four hours of moderate use out of the Slate before it required recharging. It's about what we'd expect from a decent laptop, but still lower than the six hours-plus we've achieved with an iPad. Like Apple's device, it's a sealed unit, so there's no way to carry a spare battery when you're on an extended trip.

and the stylus made our taps and swipes far more accurate. But without it we were left wondering if we need to lose some weight from the end of our fingers.

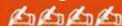
Windows 8 is imminent, and unlike Windows 7's bodged touchscreen interface it's been built from the ground up with touch and tablets in mind. If you're really keen on the Samsung Slate – and it is a really decent little unit with a screen resolution to run the full Metro experience – we'd recommend holding out until Windows 8 is released.

DETAILS

Features

- Windows 7 Home
- Premium 64-bit
- 4GB DDR3 memory
- Intel Core i5 processor 2467M
- Intel HD Graphics 3000
- 64GB solid-state hard drive
- 2.0 megapixel webcam
- 11.6-inch touch screen
- 4 cell battery
- P-Dock
- Bluetooth keyboard

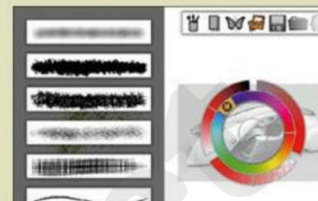
Rating



INCOMING ANDROID APPS

SOFTWARE ROUND-UP

Google Play makes finding a new Android app stress free...



INFINITE PAINTER

Sean Brakefield

A simple and accessible app with intuitive menus, a Painter-like colour wheel and pressure sensitivity support, Infinite Painter replicates real paints, brushes and canvases. A great app for Android. Price £3.13

www.bit.ly/painterapp



PHOTOSHOP TOUCH

Adobe

The familiar setup of Photoshop on a tablet. While it has a host of strong editing tools and supports the Creative Cloud, digital painters may feel shortchanged.

Price £6.99

www.bit.ly/adobetouch



SKETCHBOOK MOBILE

Autodesk

This is one of the most complete drawing and painting apps available on Android. It comes with a wealth of editing options for digital painting, although it lacks the function to resize canvases to HD.

Price £3.18

www.bit.ly/sketchmobile

These are just a starting point – why not search for more Android painting apps on Google's new Google Play store?

www.bit.ly/playgoogle



CGHub

iPhone

You can't yet upload artwork directly to the CGHub app, but other aspects about using the art community are better on the app version than on the website.

VERY APP This new iPhone app distils CGHub's online community of artists into a manageable app-size chunk to access anywhere, anytime

Price Free **Company** CGHub **Web** www.cghub.com **Contact** Via website

CGHUB's new iPhone app makes browsing and commenting on the fantastic array of artists and artwork on its website even easier, by condensing it down into a more usable and portable format.

The easy-to-use interface that runs along the bottom of the screen enables you to filter artwork by either Newest, Most Popular, a Random Selection, or by viewing the latest work from the artists you're following or have made a Favourite.

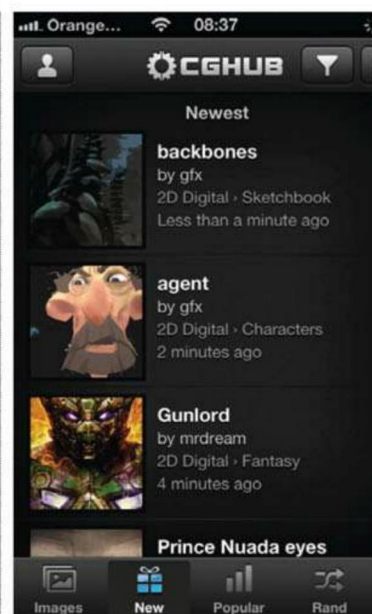
You can also set-up email alerts to tell you of their new work, so you never miss an update. For further specific filtering there's a contextual menu at the top right that makes it possible to sort by Category or Genre. However, there's currently no option to search for specific artists or image titles. This is disappointing, although we're told this is coming in a later version. You can still do this via the website though, because

your profile will be the same on both formats and it syncs automatically.

The artwork is at the same high resolution as on the website and so can be viewed at full screen (either portrait or landscape) and also by using the zoom function, to show off all the detail without losing any of the quality.

By launching it on the iPhone first, CGHub has focused on making community a priority and so commenting and Favouriting images is much easier than on the site – it's no longer hidden away in a sidebar. You can share image links via Twitter and Facebook easily, as well as download the hi-res artwork to your iPhone to use as wallpaper or inspiration.

Unfortunately, you can't upload artwork to the app, which makes for a somewhat passive experience. This is fine on the iPhone but may be a bigger deal on the iPad version, especially now that there are so many powerful digital painting apps available.



Browse the newest or most popular artwork, or just select Random to find something different.

DETAILS

Features

- Easy-to-use interface
- Comment on and Favourite artists' work
- Share your art links via Facebook and on Twitter
- Download hi-res artwork to your phone
- Follow your favourite artists and receive email alerts about their newest work
- Browse the newest artwork or the most popular
- Available in languages such as Arabic or Chinese
- Works in landscape and portrait mode
- Same hi-res image as on website
- Uses existing CGHub profiles and syncs instantly

System Requirements

iPhone: iOS5.0 or later

Rating



Designer Pro's 3D objects really come to life, but they're also incredibly simple to use.



PC ONLY

Xara Designer Pro

TURNING PRO Can Xara's all-in-one design suite rival Photoshop?

Price £249

Company Xara

Web www.xara.com

RATING

English company Xara's cheap software has attracted millions of users, but it hasn't been able to take on the big boys Adobe and Corel. Its latest offering – Designer Pro – is an all-in-one design suite that costs a lot less than its competitor's products.

Most of the essential tools are here, but where Designer Pro differs is in its prioritisation of vector graphics, Illustrator style. Draw a line and it creates nodes that can be dragged into new positions, so your art can be tweaked even after it's been coloured and filled.

Three-dimensional functionality is included, although it's a little more basic than Photoshop's. Any shapes created in Designer Pro can be extruded and then manipulated in three dimensions. The software automatically handles the lighting and shading of objects, anti-aliasing them so they look smooth.

On top of the basics of image manipulation and creation are a whole suite of tools, including handy features such as Flash Export for the web and an option to create entire websites. But it's PC only, so Mac users will have to stick with Adobe's more expensive offering.



Designer Pro includes a bevy of clipart, website templates and pre-rendered photo calendars.

SketchBook Ink iPad

SCORE DRAW Will Autodesk's new pen and ink app be an instant hit or a damp squib?

Price £1.49 **Company** Autodesk **Web** www.autodesk.co.uk **Contact** +44 (0) 1252 456600

SketchnBook Ink is a pen-based drawing app from the team that brought you the excellent SketchBook Pro. However, it lacks the in-depth features that make its stablemate so strong.

Ink is quick and easy to pick up and use, but unlike Procreate with its simple, artist-friendly interface that we reviewed in issue 85, there's no depth to that simple exterior. For example, there are seven preset brushes along the side, which are based on popular defaults such as marker pens and wet brushes, but these aren't editable apart from the size. This immediately limits the range of artwork you can produce.

Drawing in Ink is simple and intuitive. Its defining feature is dynamic rendering, which means brushes appear without pixelation even at full zoom on an iPad 1. This makes working in extreme detail straightforward and when combined with the ability to have an infinite canvas (size is determined when exporting and you can create artwork at up to 101.5 megapixels or

8,727x11,636px) you have the potential to create some intricate, pixel-free artwork. Unfortunately, when zoomed in it can show up the brushes' hard edges and some of the quirks in their rendering (especially when using wet brushes at large sizes), resulting in ugly shapes if misused.

These minor shortcomings could be forgiven with time and a few behind-the-scenes updates, but SketchBook Ink's major omission is layers. A basic requirement of drawing and painting apps, SketchBook Ink has none – unless you count the ability to add a photo as a background layer – and so means building up layers of colour isn't as intuitive as it could be.

SketchBook Ink is an app filled with promise and with the potential to be great, but it's sorely lacking in depth. At the relatively cheap price of £1.49 it'll develop its own fanbase because it can produce stunning results, and with time may well be updated. However, the current version isn't sufficiently feature-rich to challenge the more versatile apps on the market.

DETAILS

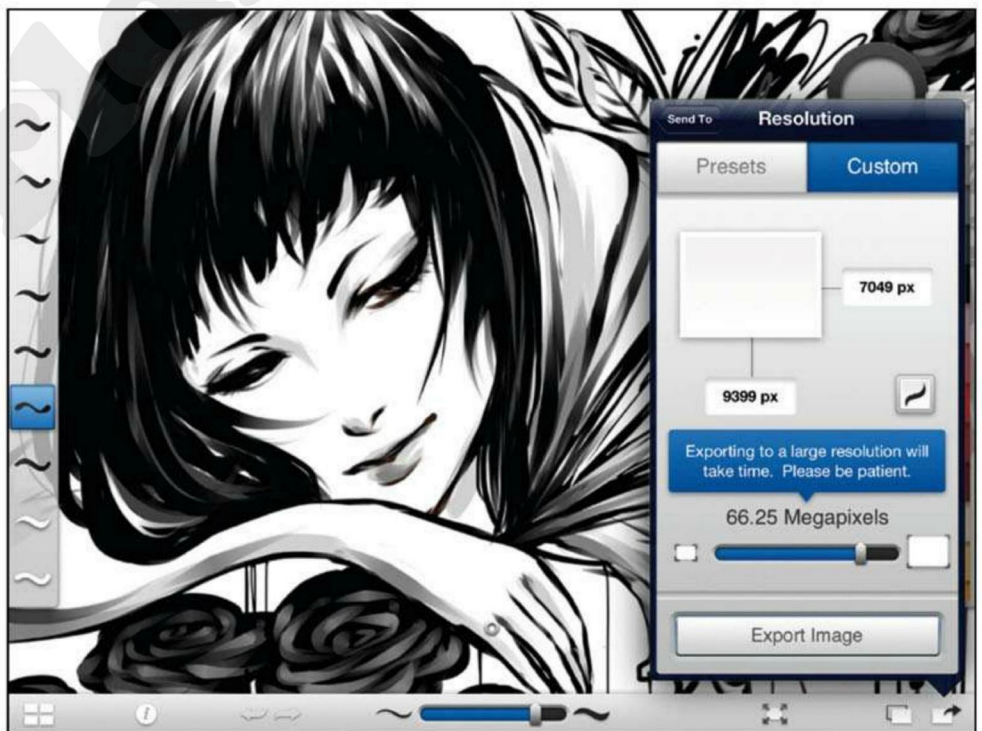
Features

- Infinite canvas
- Export images up to 101 megapixels
- Share images to iTunes or Dropbox
- Simple, clutter-free interface
- Dynamic rendering shows brushes with solid edges even when fully zoomed in
- Seven brush presets
- Unlimited undo options
- Familiar UI to SketchBook Pro, including activation ring
- Import images from Photos to use as background
- Colour picker and loupe

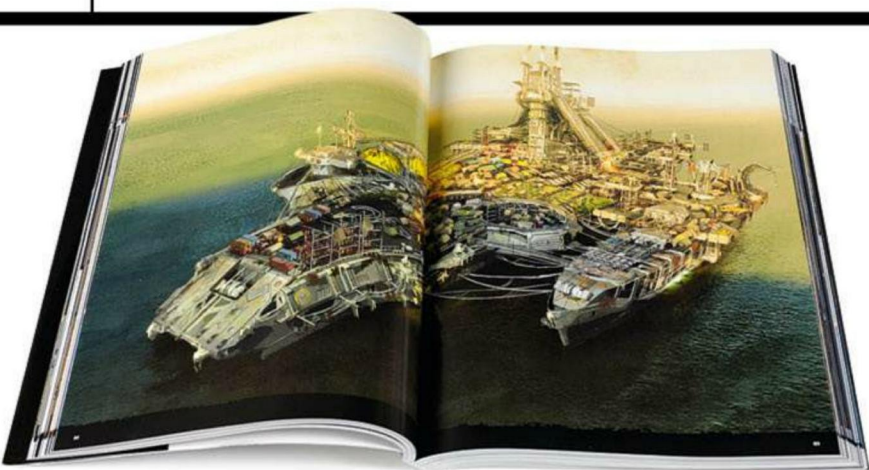
System Requirements

iPad: iOS 5.0 or later

Rating



SketchBook Ink has a simple, unfussy interface that can be hidden via the same activation ring that users of SketchBook Pro will be familiar with.



The Art of Gears of War 3

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT Epic's blockbuster threequel receives the full behind-the-scenes treatment

Editor Ronnie Gramazio **Publisher** Ballistic Publishing **Price** £51
Web www.ballisticpublishing.com **Available** Now

Epic Games's *Gears of War* franchise is an important one. Not only did its *Unreal Engine 3* show off the Xbox 360's graphical capabilities, but it provided a mishmash of sci-fi and fantasy tropes carried off with just enough panache to be enjoyable. *Gears of War 3* upped the ante further, with absurdly muscular protagonist Marcus Fenix and his crew meting out chainsaw justice to an entirely new otherworldly enemy, the Lambent.

Its tie-in art of book weighs in at a suitably epic 320 pages, with a suitably epic price tag of £51. Publisher Ballistic – which adds this title to its other art of games books *Uncharted 2* and *God of War III* – even say it's the biggest tome the company's ever produced. As a result there's elaborate detail and depth on show that most art books could only dream of, with page upon glossy page of breakdowns, concept sketches and in-game renderings.

What's notable throughout is the sheer amount of design work that went into *Gears of War 3*. Standard terrestrial vehicles and vessels were beefed up to fit in with the *Gears* universe, and enemies were created to be recognisable from one another in a split-second glance. Everything had to

function in the game world, too: for example, cars had to be a certain height to provide cover during the game's far-reaching battles.

As a big-budget title, *Gears of War 3* features a cinematic approach to its artwork, and it's a mistake to think that games are any less visionary and grandiose than Hollywood blockbusters. Some of the work displayed here is awe-inspiring, such as a floating city made of a few warships

strapped together, or an anachronistic Tudor-style town. New characters were created to fit in with the environments, and older ones were made to look subtly older and heavier than they were in their last outing.

Digital artists will find a lot to love here, and a lot to learn from – this book is the accumulation of years of work, as the art team inched towards the art director's

idea of *Gears of War* perfection. It also offers insight into the process of mega game development as a whole, with excised content often highlighting the tempestuous nature of the medium. The asking price represents the content on offer, making this another exemplary edition in Ballistic's matchless project-specific game art series.

RATING



Further reading...

Explore the world of terrible lizards and the Caped Crusader's runabout

Dinosaur Art: The World's Greatest Paleoart

Editor Steve White

Publisher Titan Books **Price** £25

Available 4 September

RATING



Drawing dinosaurs, or paleoart as this book dubs it, is a unique field. Taking reference from discovered skeletal remains, scientific studies of skin colouring and habitat, artists have to blend a solid understanding of biology and anatomy with their own imagination to create dramatic and interesting compositions.

Ten paleoartists' work is featured here, accompanied by in-depth interviews on influences and techniques. Each artist has a different take on what those giant lizards were like: Doug Henderson sketches serene landscapes, whereas Robert Nichols creates violent, toothy encounters. It's a knowledgeable compendium, and a great reference for anyone who likes dinosaurs. And who doesn't?

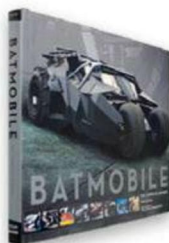
Batmobile: The Complete History

Author Mark Cotta Vaz

Publisher Titan Books **Price** £25

Available Now

RATING



We're all used to seeing Batman behind the wheel of a black, mean-looking muscle car, so it's surprising to find out that Bob Kane's 1939 creation first drove a modest red saloon. Such low-key beginnings are reflected in the structure of this book, which starts off with the early Batman comics, then steps up a gear to briefly cover the 1960s TV series, before racing through the Batmobile's big-screen incarnations.

With the book tying in with the release of *The Dark Knight Rises*, it's perhaps no surprise that the tank-like Tumbler receives the most attention. Shame, because we'd have liked to see more photos of the glorious 1955 Lincoln Futura, complete with its turbines and atomic batteries.



Here we see Jordy in the early stages, blocking out, before using specialist tools for detailing his creature.



Above, painting with an airbrush; below, hand-painting the eyes (reflections).



Maquette Sculpting & Painting

MODEL MASTER Film creature sculptor Jordy Schell shares his process for building a model, whether it's for reference or just for fun...

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$59 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

You may not be automatically attracted to the idea of creating models of your own characters to inhabit your work area. Yet learning to sculpt a maquette (a French term that loosely means 'scale model') is an invaluable skill for anyone who wants to make their art feel real.

Building a scaled-down version of your character or creature design helps you understand the form and how light affects it like nothing else. Perhaps Jordy Schell explains it best in the third chapter of his video: "Going for realism is the essential part of creating creatures: the idea should be to convince people that they're real." No wonder the likes of James Gurney swear by model-making as an essential part of the artistic process.

The video offers a helpful primer in the process of taking your maquette from its blocked-out beginnings to textured perfection. You'll need to research some of the essentials

yourself, such as sourcing or making armatures and understanding your sculpting material options, but Jordy's workshop covers every step of the sculpting process itself. And when you see him using just his fingers to form a correctly posed hand model in only a few minutes, you'll know you're in the presence of a master. The studio-based session is well-lit and shot, although model limbs coming into shot as the maquette is turned sometimes stop you seeing what's being done, as Jordy acknowledges in his narration.

He starts by shaping crude forms with his hands to get proportions and pose right, then refines the model stage by stage, introducing more precise tools. The attention to detail is almost obsessive: you'll see how Jordy bakes teeth to insert with tweezers and applies tiny pin-pricks across the skin to represent pores. Even digital-only painters will learn from the way Jordy combines brush and airbrush to colour the model's skin.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Blocking out the form
- Head scale and posture
- Blending and refining forms
- Veins, eyes and nails
- Painting the skin surface
- Teeth and gums

Length

166 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

JORDU SCHELL

Owner and head designer of Schell Sculpture Studio, Jordy has been in the film and television industry since 1987. His credits include *Avatar*, *Men in Black*, *Batman Returns*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Alien: Resurrection*, *The X-Files*, *Predator 2* and *Evolution*. For TV series *Babylon 5*, Jordy designed Emmy award-winning creature make-up and the first fully digital creature seen in a television series.



The artist has also taught around the world, including at Blizzard Entertainment.

www.schellstudio.com



A pirate's only as good as his crew, even if they are surprisingly curvaceous and plagued by gout.

The Pirates! In An Adventure With Scientists

TOP AAAART Luxurious, fun-packed, with great design, wit and wonder – we give a big arrgh! to Aardman's latest

Distributor Sony **Certificate** U **Price** £20 (Blu-ray, £25; Blu-ray 3D, £30) **Available** 10 September

At the heart of Aardman's latest movie is a madcap sense of fun, helped all the way to the baking soda-fuelled grand finale by Gideon Defoe's sharp script, based on his own best-selling books.


The ludicrous plot of *The Pirates! In An Adventure With Scientists* sees the luxuriantly bearded pirate captain on a quest to become the world's most renowned pirate, and save a dodo. We meet a crew of cross-dressing, gout-infected, shiny cutless-loving pirates and, in their arch enemy, a food-obsessed Queen Victoria. The jokes keep running; Darwin fails to spot his own theory of evolution.

Key to bringing *The Pirates!* comical world to life is the production design from Norman Garwood, whose vision of Aardman's new world surprises at every turn. While the set-pieces steal your attention, such as a chaotic chase sequence in a bathtub, it's often the incidental details – the rag-tag pirate ship made from spare parts and detailed with rooftop gardens – that keep you watching.

Likewise, ImagineFX contributor Jonny Duddle's character designs are fresh and full of life. Whether it's a peg-legged-pirate who's more wood than man or the pirate king's nod to Elvis, every character is larger than life and jumps from the screen, helped by a great voice cast including Hugh Grant, Martin Freeman and David Tennant.

Aardman's animation is flawless and full of eccentricity. The plan was to adapt Gideon Defoe's books about madcap pirate adventures into a CG movie. After seeing preproduction models, director Peter Lord and his crew couldn't resist creating Aardman's first stop-motion feature film since 2005. It's an art form that, done with this

much love, exudes a personality often missing from polygons.

Behind-the-scenes features include a look into the painstaking process of making the pirates movie, which all goes to prove that a good script backed by great art, results in a real treasure of a film. 

RATING




Jonny Duddle's fun character designs were faithfully translated into stop-motion models for the film.



ARTIST INTERVIEW

JONNY DUDDE

The concept artist behind the film shares the booty of his art brain

What main differences did you find working on the film compared to working on your books?

I would say the audience, and the work's purpose. The main aim of a character design is to provide a useful drawing to a model maker, whether it's CG or a physical puppet. But even before you get to the stage of a finished design, concept art gives a visual milestone that everyone involved can discuss. If a pirate is described as big and burly, everyone will have a different pirate in their heads, until the first drawing. With a book, the illustrations will hopefully be around for a long time to come, so I worry more about the level of finish and getting the image right.

How did your artwork influence the story and characters?

Everybody who works as a concept artist on a film makes suggestions and has input into the design of the characters, and some influence on story elements, under the supervision of the directors. We worked to the script, in this case written by Gideon Defoe (who wrote the series of books the movie is based on), and the brief provided by the directors, in this case Peter Lord and Jeff Newitt. They have a vision, and as a concept artist you listen to their descriptions of a character or a scene and provide art that hopefully fits. But it's particularly satisfying when a small detail you think is funny in a drawing, that wasn't necessarily briefed, ends up in a scene in the film.

What was your favourite part about working on the film?

Making regular visits to the model-making department and seeing the concept art come to life. I've been a big fan of Aardman since I was a student, so it was a dream come true to be so involved in an Aardman movie.

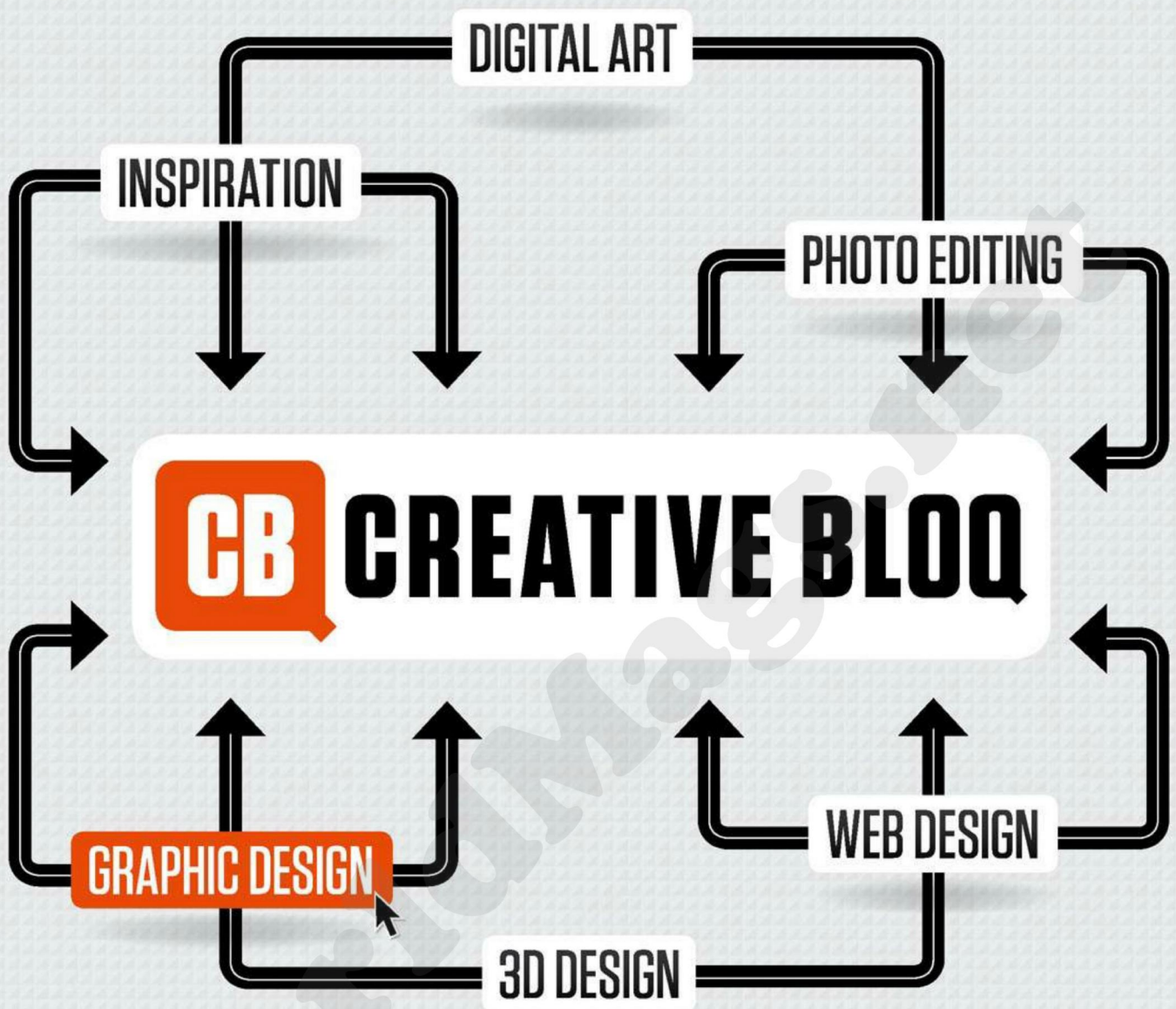


Visit our site to read ImagineFX's full interview with Jonny Duddle, and see some of his fantastic artwork.

www.imaginefx.com/ifx-jduddle

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Persona 4 Arena is an effervescent celebration of 2D art and animation.

Persona 4 Arena

MANGA MAULER Some of Japan's most cherished game characters fight for your undivided attention

Format PS3, Xbox 360 **Publisher** Zen United
Price £40 **Available** 31 August **Web** www.atlus.com/p4arena

While every other developer was knee-deep in the mid-1990s 3D arms race, Arc System Works was Switzerland. It opted out of the war entirely and used the PlayStation's power to throw around the most beautiful 2D sprites ever seen in a fighter. Today the company has more experience with hand-drawn 2D art than any other developer on Earth, and nobody does it better.

BlazBlue proved what current-generation hardware could do for 2D art and Persona 4 Arena picks up where Arc's last fighter left off. The game throws gigantic HD characters around at high speed, fills the screen with visual effects and packs your console's memory with over 2,000

hand-drawn animations per character. It's the most detailed and deliberate 2D game ever made, loaded with classic animated techniques that no 3D artist would – or could – touch. Persona 4 Arena constantly stretches limbs for a frame or two to make kicks 'snap', and enlarges feet and hands to give punches and kicks more impact.

Persona 4 Arena is Arc's first collaboration with Atlus, from whom it borrowed Persona's long-time art director Shigenori Soejima. Known for his clean lines and intricate detail, Shigenori's approach to his work is perfect for a fighter. He obsesses about fashion and about how a single accessory can define a character. This enables you to understand Persona 4's cast before they even start fighting. You can probably pick your favourite before ever pressing Start.

Persona 4 Arena brings Shigenori's art to life better than any Atlus 3D game ever managed. From both a technical and creative point of view, Arena's a great fighter and as good as any sprite-based title gets.

RATING



Also look at...

Two retro-inspired titles show how design can save or swamp a game



Transformers: Fall of Cybertron

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360

Publisher Activision

Price £40

Available 24 August

RATING

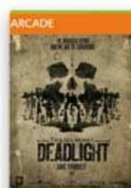
Transformers has a history of rotten games, but High Moon's War for Cybertron was produced quick and cheap and was far better than it had any right to be. Two years later, Fall of Cybertron is the game War could have been.

High Moon Studios' Lead Artist, Ivan Power, redesigned every key Transformer from scratch for War For Cybertron, and his team have done another pass for 2012 with bulkier and more militarised robots. Every Transformer is loaded with detail and tiny mechanical animations. High Moon has perfected chrome, steel, iron and paint to fill the world with texture.

Reinventing Transformers is a dream job for an artist raised on Optimus Prime and Megatron, and Ivan's team



has done it with more respect than Michael Bay's movies ever managed. The Transformers feel like giant chunky toys getting smashed into one another by a child's hands, exactly as they should.



Deadlight

Format Xbox 360

Publisher Microsoft

Price £10.20

Available Now

RATING

Deadlight is what happens when you try to improve on something you should have finished hours ago. A side-scrolling platform puzzler in the style of 90s adventure Flashback, the game's set in a post-apocalyptic 1986 beautifully designed by art director César Sampedro. It's a 2D world with depth and an incredible sense of scale in



the backgrounds. Deadlight's obsession with style is consistent, right down to the subtle VHS distortion at the edges of objects.

But Sampedro's team just couldn't leave it alone, and

the art gets in the way of the game. Deadlight looks so busy, it's hard to work out what the game's level designers want you to do next. You'll miss jumps because the incredible backgrounds confused your eyes and you'll be stumped by puzzles because the world's clutter has disguised the obvious solution. There's a good game beneath all that art, but it's often impossible to see.



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Deathly stare

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Zombie ape

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© Artwork clockwise, from top left: Elizabeth Le, L.J. Bamforth, Sacha Angel Diener and Stephane Paitreau.

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